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THE SEMITIC BASIS  
OF THE  
AMHARIC LEXICON



David L. Appleyard

1975

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to examine the make-up of the Amharic vocabulary, principally from the point of view of Amharic as a Semitic language. There can be no doubt that Amharic is a Semitic language in accordance with all the tenets and methods of standard language classification. Typically this does not rely primarily on lexical evidence, but more on the "conservative" levels of analysis, such as morphology. The level of the lexicon probably occupies the opposite position to morphology in so far as it is typically the least conservative and the most subject to innovation and outside influence. It is this sensitivity of the lexicon to extra-linguistic factors such as ethnic contacts, cultural patterns and directions, influences from outside the community (political, commercial, or intellectual), and so on that provides the value of this kind of study of the vocabulary of a language.

The first part of this thesis examines the Semitic basis of the Amharic lexicon from the angle of the straightforward dictionary-list and then from the evidence of various texts, the latter taking into account the important factor of relative word frequencies. The figures from these analyses reveal that approximately 73% of the identifiable roots in the lexicon are of inherited Semitic origin and that this proportion increases to an average of 85% in the texts; that is to say, that, generally speaking, the higher frequency roots are overwhelmingly of inherited Semitic origin. The principal other constituent sources of vocabulary in Amharic are, in descending order, Cushitic (Especially Agaw), Arabic, Ge'ez, Aramaic and Hebrew, and finally European languages.

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The second part of this thesis examines in detail, by means of individual etymological discussions of representative items, a number of semantic fields chosen to cover a wide spectrum of culturally specific and non-specific vocabulary. The overall trend here reflects the principle that much of the general, or basic vocabulary of Amharic in all fields is inherited Semitic, whilst loan elements, of whatever origin, are typically names of specific objects.



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David L. Appleyard.



## ABBREVIATIONS

Journals

ACISE	Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, anno 357, 1960.
AE	Annales d'Ethiopie.
BA	Beiträge zur Assyriologie und vergleichenden semitischen Sprachwissenschaft.
BSL	Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris.
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
GLECS	Comptes rendus du Groupe linguistique d'études chamito-sémitiques.
JAL	Journal of African Languages.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JES	Journal of Ethiopian Studies (Addis Ababa).
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies.
RANL	Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche.
RO	Rocznik orientalistyczny.
RSE	Rassegna di studi etiopici.
RSO	Rivista degli studi orientali.
VT	Vetus Testamentum.
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie.
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft.
ZS	Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete.

Languages

Akk.	Akkadian.	Aram.	Aramaic.
Amh.	Amharic.	Bil.	Bilin.
Ar.	Arabic.	Ch.	Chaha, Čäha.

Cush.	Cushitic.	M.	Muhār, Muxār.
E.	əža.	Ms.	Mäskan.
End.	əndägäñ.	Sem.	Semitic.
Enn.	ənnāmor.	Sid.	Sidamo.
ESA.	Epigraphic South Arabian.		
Eth.	Ethiopian. (Sem.Eth., S.Eth., N.Eth.)		
Gaf.	Gafat.	Sl.	Səlti
Gk.	Greek.	Sod.	Soddo (Aymälläl).
Go.	Gogot.	Som.	Somali.
Gy.	Gyeto.	Soq.	Soqotri.
Gz.	Ge'ez.	Syr.	Syriac.
Har.	Harari.	Te.	Tigre, Təgre.
Heb.	Hebrew.	Tna.	Tigrinya, Təgrəñña.
Kem.	Kemant.	Ug.	Ugaritic.
Khm.	Khamir, Xamir.	Wl.	wäläne.
		Z.	Zway.



## TRANSCRIPTION

The transcription followed in this thesis for Semitic Ethiopian and other Semitic languages is that usually employed in modern works on Semitic languages. The only points to note are that in the transcription of modern Semitic Ethiopian the voiceless velar fricative, which is sometimes rendered by k, has been written here as x. On the other hand, what is, or was the same, or approximately the same sound elsewhere in Semitic, including Ge'ez, has been transcribed by h, according to the normal practice. Hence, Ch. xäpt, Tna. čoxä, Har. xädäna, etc., but Gz. hoša, Ar. hāra, etc. Note that the fricativized k of Tigrinya has similarly been transcribed as x: Caläxti. Secondly, the so-called b<sup>e</sup>ghadk<sup>e</sup>phath letters of Hebrew and Aramaic have not been distinguished from the non-fricativized forms here: thus, gārap and not gārap̄; delet and not delet̄, etc.

The transcription of Cushitic forms generally follows that of the source (Reinisch, Cerulli, Conti Rossini, Moreno, etc.) of the individual item.

## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is the lexicon of Amharic and its relation to and connexions with the other languages of the Ethiopian language area, both Semitic and non-Semitic. No language functions or develops in isolation; there are, on the one hand, inherited patterns and tendencies shared with related languages, which may or may not be in contact with the subject language and, on the other, the influence of neighbouring languages, of whatever genetic affiliation, and languages regarded as prestigious by virtue of the material, intellectual, or political superiority of their speakers. Linguistically, as in other ways, Ethiopia is far from being a closed or isolated area. In addition to the Semitic Ethiopian languages, of which Amharic is one, the Ethiopian language area contains nearly all the languages that have been classified as Cushitic and Omotic. Not all Cushitic and very few Omotic languages turn out to be particularly relevant to this study of the Amharic lexicon. The third language group, occurring on the periphery of the area and apparently only of minor if not negligible relevance here, includes some East Sudanic and related languages. All these languages in varying degrees and at various times have interacted with one another. In this thesis I shall be looking only at the effect that these other linguistic elements have had on the vocabulary of Amharic, but equally well one might examine the reverse process: the effect of Semitic Ethiopian languages on the other languages of Ethiopia. The degree and manner of influence between these various languages are conditioned by numerous factors, much the same as those relating to

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influences from outside the Ethiopian language area, namely, at the simplest level, geographical contiguity and, in a more complex vein, considerations of cultural and/or political superiority and prestige. Of course, in this connexion, it should also be borne in mind that it is not always the same group of languages that have had an influence on one another; the languages particularly relevant to this study of Amharic almost certainly have not exercised the same degree of effect over Harari, for example.

Outside the Ethiopian language area, but of considerable importance in the history of the Amharic lexicon, are neighbouring Semitic languages, particularly Arabic. The latter has not only provided a sizable body of lexical material of its own but has also been the medium through which a number of Turkish, Persian and Greek items reached Ethiopia. A smaller body of religious or quasi-religious vocabulary entered Semitic Ethiopian in the early centuries of the Christian era directly from Aramaic and Hebrew, one the one hand, and from Greek, on the other.

Finally, as might be expected, in recent years Western European languages, particularly English, French and Italian, have provided additions to the lexical stock of Amharic.

These, then, briefly are the principal contributors to the make-up of the Amharic lexicon. Predictably there is also a significant body of unidentified lexical material. This does not necessarily imply that a source different from the ones outlined above must lie behind these items; their classification as 'unidentified' is required by the lack of a satisfactory formal and semantic etymology in accordance with the rules of sound correspondence set out

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in the following chapter and (just as important) the bounds of common sense and a feeling for what is likely or reasonable<sup>1</sup>. All languages tend to contain some unidentifiable elements in their vocabularies, and this is especially prominent in the case concerning us here, where the lexicography of the language being studied, as well as that of its neighbours, is still, comparatively speaking, in its infancy. It has rightly been the goal of linguistics over the last century to provide itself with formal patterns of procedure and to apply to its material an adequately rigorous methodology like any other modern science. However, for practical purposes, the field of semantic development especially still necessarily retains an element of unpredictability and irregularity which appears to defy reduction to fixed formal rules. It is partly due to this factor of uncertainty that this unidentified element in the vocabulary exists. To take an example, the common Semitic Ethiopian root kb' 'anoint' has a satisfactory formal cognate both in Heb. qb<sup>c</sup> 'fix' and in Akk. gabû 'say', but the semantic connexion seems highly improbable. It is not inconceivable that the present semantic range of these various items represents the end product of a chain of development now lost to us and not recoverable. Alternatively, the correspondence between the Semitic Ethiopian form, on the one hand, and the Hebrew and Akkadian forms, on the other, may be mere chance.

It is worth taking a look here at the present and historical ethnic make-up of our area in order to gauge from that angle what the linguistic possibilities might be in the formation of the Amharic vocabulary. Above I briefly

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1. For a more detailed discussion on this unidentified element see p.63 ff

outlined the linguistic components that appear in this study simply on the evidence of the language material itself. Precisely because Amharic is a Semitic language, as defined by the accepted methods of language classification, and, as such, must ultimately have shared in the linguistic prehistory of the other Asiatic Semitic languages, the prime source for lexical research will be among these other cognate languages. Secondly, whether Semitic speech entered Ethiopia from across the Red Sea, as indeed seems the more likely<sup>1</sup>, or whether it is indigenous to Ethiopia, there still remain the particularly close cultural ties with Southern Arabia. Since, according to standard classification procedure, the closest ties of Semitic Ethiopian within the family of Semitic languages lie with South Arabian, it would not seem unreasonable to look there in particular for common lexical features. There are, indeed, a few very interesting correlations between Semitic Ethiopian and South Arabian<sup>2</sup>, but not an overtly impressive number.

Apart from Semitic languages, however, the non-Semitic languages of Ethiopia have had an important part to play in the history of all Semitic Ethiopian languages. Within the scope of practicable historical linguistic research in Ethiopia the chief non-Semitic components remain essentially the same as they are today. The distribution of the population groups speaking some of these languages has changed even within recorded history and some languages, such as the Agaw idiom of the Falashas, known to have been spoken until quite recently, may since have disappeared.

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1. At least an identifiable and datable cultural and presumably linguistic influence reached Ethiopia from S.Arabia from the second half of the first millennium B.C. onwards.

2. See p.178 .



Nevertheless, the overall ethnic constituents and their languages remain the same. The major non-Semitic component in Amharic is by far and away Cushitic, and particularly Central Cushitic or Agaw, and to a lesser degree Eastern Cushitic (Sidamo, Galla, Saho-Afar, Somali). For our purposes these peoples and their languages can be regarded as autochthonous, bearing in mind the later movements and expansion of some of the E.Cushitic speaking peoples. If the nucleus of the Semitic component in Ethiopia is placed in an area roughly corresponding to that of the Axumite state, which is certainly the case in the cultural and linguistic history of Amharic, then the geographical distribution of these two Cushitic groups confirms and supports their linguistic predominance among the non-Semitic elements in the Amharic lexicon. It has, of course, long been realized that Agaw provided the substratum upon which Amharic, and Tigrinya for that matter, developed. North Cushitic (Beja) intrusion into the Ethiopian area is known to have occurred during the later Axumite period and, as such, is as expected of marginal significance in the history of Amharic, though not, of course, in that of N.Ethiopian, particularly Tigre. For more or less the same reasons of comparative geographical remoteness and recent date of appearance on the scene from the point of view of Amharic, the Omotic languages of S.W.Ethiopia are not prominent in this study. The same can be said of the E.Sudanic languages of Ethiopia. The ethnic history of Ethiopia within the time span appropriate to this study includes no other ethno-linguistic groups that might be relevant.

The Semitic Ethiopian languages can be divided into two major groups, North Ethiopian (Ge'ez, Tigrinya, Tigre) and

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South Ethiopian. This geographical division would seem to coincide with a genetic dichotomy as identified primarily on the grounds of morphological structure<sup>1</sup>. The nucleus of the argument for this division would seem to rest chiefly on the patterns of verb inflexion<sup>2</sup>. It may be debated whether this alone is a sufficient basis on which to postulate a North - South dichotomy. Some of the morphological features common to certain S.Ethiopian languages may equally well be explained as due to contagion rather than inheritance. Nevertheless, I feel that the range and nature of the morphological arguments here are worth serious consideration as arising from something more than the geographical contiguity of the languages concerned. What we must ask, however, is whether the lexicon can provide any complementary evidence for or against this division of Semitic Ethiopian. There is a number of lexical isoglosses which distinguish S.Ethiopian as a whole from N.Ethiopian, though this in turn appears initially to be counterbalanced by certain lexical ties between Amharic and N.Ethiopian, especially Tigrinya. An important qualification must be made here, however, namely that the Amharic-Tigrinya isoglosses are of a different order from the S.Ethiopian ones. The former nearly all belong to the culturally sensitive field of social organization<sup>3</sup>, whilst the latter may typically be characterized as 'basic' vocabulary<sup>4</sup> and, as such, are less likely to be due to direct borrowing or contagion than the

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1. See R.Hetzron, Ethiopian Semitic, Manchester 1972.

2. ibid., p. 22-9.

3. See p.174 ff.

4. See p.102 ff.



Amharic-Tigrinya isoglosses. Such contrary instances do not necessarily invalidate the lexical or, indeed, the much more important morphological evidence for the North-South split. Amharic has long been subject to the cultural influence of the north and was indeed later to become the principal linguistic medium of Ethiopia some time after the shift of the political nucleus of the country towards the south. In consequence of the common Christian faith, Amharic and the Amharas also inherited many of the traditions, linguistic and cultural, just as much as political, of the north, whilst the other S.Ethiopian languages for the most part have either remained on the periphery of this traditional Christian Ethiopian cultural sphere if not actually outside it. Some, like Harari, have turned their cultural and consequently their linguistic sights towards the Arabic speaking world in conjunction with conversion to Islam.

In genetic terms the closest S.Ethiopian languages to Amharic are Argobba, Harari and East Gurage (Səlti, Wälāne, Zway and ənnākər). Of these Argobba is certainly the closest to Amharic both from the point of view of the morphology and the lexicon; much of the vocabulary of the two languages is identical or almost identical, so much so that Argobba has been called a dialect of Amharic<sup>1</sup>. The term 'dialect' is still, however, rather imprecise; Argobba is certainly not recognized as a dialect of Amharic by native speakers. There is some lexical support for this subgroup of S.Ethiopian languages (Hetzron's 'Transversal South Ethiopic'), though because of the proximity and cultural interdependence of other S.Ethiopian languages, alleged genetic divisions are not so readily reflected in

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1. Leslau, 'An analysis of the Argobba vocabulary', JAL, VI, 1967, p. 102.



the lexicon here as in the case of North v. South Ethiopian. The remaining S.Ethiopian languages, with the exception of Gafat, have at times all been grouped together under the term Gurage, a rather inexact term linguistically which was also used to encompass the East Gurage languages named above. According to Hetzron's classification<sup>1</sup> there are thirteen of these languages, the most important of which for this study are Gafat, Soddo (or Aymellel) and Chaha (Čāha). Their importance here lies chiefly in the fact that they are at present better documented than the others, rather than for any genetic reason. Of course, all the Semitic Ethiopian languages have been taken into account in this study wherever appropriate documentation is available, though it will not be found necessary always to quote all relevant forms from these languages in the main part of this thesis.

Semitic and Cushitic are not totally separate language families, but both belong to the 'super-family' or phylum Hamito-Semitic (Afroasiatic) along with Egyptian, Berber, Omotic and perhaps Chadic. This is not without significance when we turn to tracing the origins of individual lexical items in Amharic. Although the connexion with Semitic is very remote, infinitely more so than between the various Semitic languages themselves, occasions do arise when the precise origin of a given lexical item is in dispute and cannot be easily resolved as definitely Semitic or Cushitic. In some cases these may represent examples of different developments of common inherited lexical stock. Our attention to this kind of phenomenon is drawn in particular when a common Semitic Ethiopian

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1. Hetzron, op.cit., p. 44-57, also table on p. 119.

item, like tägur 'hair' or ənbərt 'navel', or maybe even ənnat 'mother'<sup>1</sup>, could be explained either as a peculiar and unpredictable development of a common Semitic root, or as a loan from Cushitic, or, treading both paths at the same time, as a mixed or contaminated form. I tend to think that the identification, or partial identification, of a homophonous or nearly homophonous Cushitic term with a Semitic one by the Semiticized Cushites (or Cushiticized Semites), who at some stage in the early history of Semitic Ethiopian are likely to have been in part bilingual, must inevitably have been brought into play in some instances. To take the first example above, to ignore totally the exact semantic and close formal correspondence of the Sem.Eth. tägur (Gz. ṣäg<sup>w</sup>r) and Cushitic items like Bil. ṣəḡ<sup>w</sup>ər, Saho tagar, Som. dógór, in the face of the formally more remote Semitic šcr (Ar. ša<sup>c</sup>r, Heb. še<sup>c</sup>ar, etc.) would seem to me to be bending the facts. Another example might be Amh. gum 'mist' (Gz. gime), which could be either a development of the same Semitic root as seen in Ar. ḡaym, or a loan from some Cushitic source, cf. Sid. gomiččo 'cloud', Kambatta gōma. Of course, there are instances where Cushitic languages must have borrowed and adapted a Semitic item and these must be carefully differentiated from genuine, indigenous Cushitic forms. For example, the Kemant item ṣəxa 'clay, mud' regularly corresponds, in accordance with the sound rules, with Amh. ṣəḡa of the same meaning. However, when we turn to the other Agaw forms (Bil. dāraq<sup>w</sup>a, Khm. roq<sup>w</sup>a, Quara dax<sup>w</sup>a) and to other Cushitic forms (Galla dōke, Som. dōqo), it becomes clear that the Kemant

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1. See p.127, 120, 115, resp.



form cannot be inherited Agaw, but must have been taken from Amh. čāka and this at an early enough stage to allow for the necessary phonetic changes to produce šāxa<sup>1</sup>. The Amharic term must, then, originate from a different Cushitic source<sup>2</sup>.

Another point to bear in mind whilst searching for and identifying the origins of Amharic lexical items is the position of Semitic Ethiopian within the Semitic family. The internal classification of Semitic need not be gone into here, of course. It is, however, relevant to repeat the early connexions with and possible derivation from the Semitic speech of S.Arabia of Semitic Ethiopian. This would consequently lead one to expect a degree of common ground between the lexicons of these two language groups. As said above, there is, in fact, a number of interesting lexical ties between Semitic Ethiopian and S.Arabian, but nowhere as nearly impressive as might have been anticipated. This could, of course, be due as much to our limited knowledge of S.Arabian, coming as it does solely from epigraphic material, as to anything else.

As in almost any comparative lexical work on Semitic, material from the Arabic dictionaries figures very frequently amongst the list of cognates. This is partly due, of course, to the highly developed state of Arabic lexicography, which far outweighs the none the less ample contribution of other 'classical' Semitic lexicons and the present, far from perfect documentation of the living languages, such as those of Ethiopia or S.Arabia. More particularly, the omnipresence of Arabic material in the etymologies of Semitic Ethiopian items may also be attributed to the

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1. See D.L.Appleyard, 'A descriptive outline of Kemant', BSOAS, XXXVIII, 1975, p. 317, note 5.

2. Probably East Cushitic where an 'emphatic' initial occurs. See p.156.

geographical proximity of the two language groups. Whatever the genetic boundaries are, and on morphological grounds the connexion between Semitic Ethiopian is more 'remote' than between S.Arabian and Semitic Ethiopian, Arabic and S.Semitic are closely tied by their contiguity and could reasonably be expected to share a number of features, particularly on the more fluid and receptive level of the lexicon. There are, however, several lexical isoglosses which connect Semitic Ethiopian not with its neighbours in the Semitic field, but with East Semitic (Akkadian). For example, Amh. ayt 'mouse' : Akk. aiasu 'weasel'; Amh. ərgəb (Gz. rəgəb) 'dove' : Akk. rigab/pu; Amh. lōḥ 'child' (Gz. lōd) : Akk. līdu 'bastard'<sup>1</sup>; Sem.Eth. ngr 'speak' : Akk. nāgīru 'herald', and so on<sup>2</sup>. As in the case of a number of morphological features, the apparent connexion between E.Semitic and Semitic Ethiopian could be explained as being due to their respective positions on the periphery of the Semitic area.

Having identified and discussed the relevant language material, I may now go on to explain the object of this study. In comparative and historical linguistics the lexicon, more than any other level of linguistic analysis, can serve as a meter of subtler linguistic trends and influences. The skeleton of language classification can be deduced from a morphological study, amongst other things, and it is particularly a morphological analysis which provides the identification of a language as belonging to such-and-such a family, as, for instance, of Amharic as a Semitic language. This is because, as far as it is possible to make generalizations of this kind, morphology is generally accepted to be amongst the most stable and conservative

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1. These derive from the common Semitic root wld, which occurs throughout Semitic, but this particular concrete nominal derivative appears to occur only in Akkadian and Sem.Ethiopian.  
 2. See Leslau, 'Vocabulary common to Akkadian and South-East Semitic', JAOS, LXIV, 1944, p. 53-8.



levels of linguistic analysis, the last, as it were, to be subjected to the inroads of external influences<sup>1</sup>. Lexical material need not be brought into account in such analyses other than as a confirmation or otherwise of the results obtained from morphological criteria. However, this kind of morphological work can provide only the bare structure of the history and relations of the language. The parallel study of the lexicon may be able to clothe this skeleton and help define lines of connexion and influence more closely. The study of lexical fields, their general organization and greater or lesser resistance to external influences and their behaviour in the light both of the linguistic and cultural history of the speakers of the particular language under discussion can contribute just as valuable an element to the understanding of the history of the language as the study of other levels of analysis like morphology. Perhaps more than any other linguistic level, the lexicon is susceptible to outside influences from neighbouring and dominant languages in direct response to social and cultural developments. It is precisely because of this sensitivity of the lexicon that it cannot really be employed as a prime factor in language classification, but when viewed in conjunction with the evidence of other levels such as morphology, it may often reveal interesting parallels <sup>as well as</sup> and divergencies, too. To take an example, Amharic shares a small but significant number of lexical isoglosses with all other S.Ethiopian languages distinguishing them as a body from N.Ethiopian<sup>2</sup>. These lexical isoglosses that concur with

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1. See A.Meillet, Linguistique historique et linguistique générale, Paris 1948, p. 84.

2. See above and p.104.



morphological ones<sup>1</sup> are merely interesting parallels and should not be taken as prima facie evidence for a rift between North and South Ethiopian.

The prime object, however, of this thesis is not at all to add support or otherwise to the internal classification of Semitic Ethiopian from the lexicon. Nor am I especially concerned with the position of Semitic Ethiopian amongst the other branches of Semitic, though the evidence of the lexicon here, too, can be of particular value<sup>2</sup>. Rather, these and others are byproducts of the study of the lexicon undertaken here. We shall want to consider in particular the justification from the lexical point of view of calling Amharic a Semitic language<sup>3</sup>. We shall want to ask how far the working lexicon of Amharic has maintained its inherited Semitic component and, by the same token, to what extent the surrounding, non-Semitic, languages have penetrated this least resistant of linguistic levels. Leading on from this last point, the lexicon should provide evidence of the particular substrate language(s) or language group(s) over which Amharic has developed. The principal substratum has long been felt to be Agaw, for obvious reasons, historical as well as linguistic, and we shall see that the evidence of the lexicon bears this out. However, as stated above, other indigenous, Cushitic languages have at various times had an influence on Amharic. Certain phonetic features of the majority of Agaw items in the Amharic vocabulary tend to suggest, however, that these latter constitute an older level of borrowing than most other Cushitic items.

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1. i.e. as presented by Hetzron, op.cit.

2. See, for example, the various articles by P.Fronzaroli under the general title of 'Studi sul lessico comune semitico' in RANL, starting in Vol. VIII.XIX, 1964.

3. For a discussion on the point of Semitic language classification see E.Ullendorff, 'What is a Semitic language?', Orientalia, XXVII, 1958, p. 66-75.

I should also add at this point that there would appear to be a small number of Cushitic items common to the vocabularies of many Semitic Ethiopian languages which cannot be pinned down to a particular branch of Cushitic. The reconstructable common forms of these items in Semitic Ethiopian cannot be related directly to an existing form or forms in a present-day Cushitic language, but probably correspond to a much earlier stage of Cushitic. For example, the term for 'elephant' in most S.Ethiopian languages can be regularly derived from something like \*zāk<sup>w</sup>än (Amh. zāhon, zohon), which itself comes close to a reconstructed common Cushitic form<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps the most outstanding phonetic criterion for assigning an earlier date to Agaw loans, or at least the most readily demonstrable, concerns the appearance of a glottalized dental, stop (ṭ), fricative (ṣ), or affricate (ṭṣ), in items of Agaw origin in Amharic. The corresponding sound in the Agaw cognates is either ṣ̣ (Bilin, Kemant), ts (Southern Agaw), or, according to Reinisch's transcription, ṣ̣-ṭṣ (Khamir, etc.), as in Semitic Ethiopian. In those cases where the loan also occurs in Ge'ez, or where the scatter of the loan throughout modern Semitic Ethiopian is wide enough to permit a reasonable reconstruction, the original, common Semitic Ethiopian adaptation of the corresponding Agaw sound is ṣ. Essentially, it would seem that something like the original Agaw sound, such that it could be interpreted as ṣ̣ in Semitic Ethiopian, is preserved in Southern Agaw and in Khamir<sup>2</sup>, whilst Bilin and Kemant have shifted it to ṣ̣. The distribution and form of Agaw items, such as those containing this ṣ̣, require

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1. See p.173. For the Cushitic reconstruction see Dolgopol'skiy, Sravnitel'no-istoricheskaya fonetika kushitskikh yazykov, Moskva 1973, p. 107.

2. One has to be slightly cautious about the accuracy of earlier transcriptions of Agaw, which occasionally show the (unconscious) influence of Semitic Ethiopian phonetics particularly where the glottalized sounds are concerned.



a sufficiently long time since take-over to allow for the subsequent developments in the Agaw cognates, on the one hand, and, incidentally, the developments of the item within Semitic Ethiopian after the take-over according to its own various sound changes, on the other. This predominance and 'antiquity' of Agaw items in Semitic Ethiopian, particularly Amharic, is hardly surprising. The intrusion of the other Cushitic speaking people, whose loans in the vocabulary of Amharic probably figure next in quantity after Agaw items, namely the Galla, can be dated to the sixteenth century, whereas it does not seem unlikely that Agaw speaking peoples were occupying the central highlands, or the central part thereof, at least as long ago as is relevant to the history of Semitic Ethiopian. Their present distribution in isolated islands, more or less around the periphery of their presumed, earlier home, represents the result of centuries of dominance by the Amhara and the Amharic language<sup>1</sup>.

We shall also want to examine the superstrata elements in the Amharic lexicon, loans from outside the Ethiopian language area, usually placeable with a particular language source at a particular date and comprising specific semantic sets. Examples of this are the early Greek and Aramaic/Hebrew loans in the field of religious terminology or the later Arabic loans in the fields of commerce, warfare, intellectual life and so on.

A few words ought to be said here about the sources of the language material used in this thesis. Obviously nearly all the lexical material cited has been gathered

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1. However, Conti Rossini (La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, Wien 1912, p. 39) suggests that it was not the Agaw, but Sudanic peoples who occupied the highlands when the Semites first crossed over from S.Arabia.

from dictionaries and word-lists of various sorts. This is perfectly satisfactory for much of the Amharic, Ge'ez and "classical" Semitic material (Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Akkadian), as long as full account is taken of the semantic range of an item and specialized, context-conditioned, meanings are not treated as the semantic nucleus. Ideally, mere dictionary comparisons without reference to contextual factors governing the meaning of an item should be avoided, but this is unfortunately not always possible particularly in those instances where the only available documentary source is a small dictionary or word-list. This applies especially to the lesser known Semitic languages, such as some of the modern Semitic Ethiopian and South Arabian languages, and, regrettably, to nearly all the Cushitic languages. There is no marked shortage of material for some of the latter; rather the problem is that many of the sources that have had to be used for Agaw, Galla or Sidamo, for instance, belong to an earlier period of linguistic research. Of course, the works of Reinisch, Conti Rossini, Moreno and Cerulli on these languages are pioneering in their field and were at the time of writing, and will surely always remain, major and outstanding contributions to Cushitic linguistics; indeed, some have not yet been surpassed. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that they might not always fulfil the requirements of modern linguistics, so much advanced since their time. The more recent contributions in this field (Palmer, Andrzejewski, Hetzron, etc.) do indeed go a long way to augmenting and improving the earlier situation. However, in many cases the sheer quantity of

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the older material, such as that of Reinisch, for example, has not been surpassed<sup>1</sup>, and consequently much of the Agaw material will have to be presented here in form and meaning as documented by him. Cushitic lexicography is still in the embryonic stage and, therefore, whilst this does not necessarily invalidate the results of this study concerning Cushitic material, it must be borne in mind that some of the transcriptions given may not be of the same accuracy in terms of modern procedure as, for example, those of Semitic Ethiopian languages.

On the other hand, a great deal of modern Semitic Ethiopian material, particularly of the lesser known S.Ethiopian languages, comes from the prodigious compilations of Leslau, which were carried out along more modern lines of linguistic procedure. For the written languages like Ge'ez, Amharic itself and also Tigrinya, many of the problems that typically beset the interpretation and employment of the older documentation of the Cushitic languages, for example, do not occur.

Investigations into the various loan elements in the vocabularies of Semitic Ethiopian languages, particularly Amharic, have been carried out ever since the first serious attempts to provide descriptive grammars of the language in the nineteenth century<sup>2</sup>. Praetorius' name is perhaps the most prominent amongst early researchers into this field<sup>3</sup>. However, much etymological work that was undertaken in those early years, at a time when linguistics,

1. For instance, no new fieldwork has appeared on the Agaw languages of the Lasta region (Khamir, Khamta) since Reinisch. Bilin has been the subject of a number of valuable articles by Palmer and Southern Agaw (Awiya) has received the attention of Hetzron.

2. I leave aside the monumental works of Ludolf on Amharic and Ge'ez; they must occupy a special position of their own as primary sources for the history of Amharic.

3. Praetorius' Die amharische Sprache (Halle, 1879) is the major source of much etymological material as well as being a descriptive grammar, but see also his several articles on Ethiopian etymology in ZDMG and BA.

or 'philology', meant historical and comparative research and the Indo-Europeanists were setting the field, was not done on the same rigorous lines that modern linguistics requires; much seemed to rely on mere assonance and the details of sound correspondence were apparently treated with a light hand, if, indeed, any really conscious attempt was made to discover them. Of course, at this time, too, many of the basic tools for this kind of research, in the form of good dictionaries, were still lacking, and the knowledge of the minor languages was very hazy, if not entirely absent. Nevertheless, it has to be affirmed that a considerable debt is owed to Praetorius for his pioneering work in this field, even if present opinion in the light of stricter methods and newer, much more ample language material tends to differ in details. A little later than Praetorius, but belonging essentially to the same tradition, are the works of Brockelmann concerning Semitic Ethiopian<sup>1</sup>. More recent years have seen a flood of often excellent studies on specific topics or even individual items of the lexicon. This is not, however, the place to provide a bibliography of the subject, suffice it to say that the most prominent names in this field in this century are Cerulli, M. Cohen and Leslau, whilst equally valuable contributions have been made by Polotsky, Ullendorff, Tübiana, Strelcyn and many others.

Before dealing with particular semantic fields and individual lexical items in this thesis, a number of preliminary and complementary points will have to be gone into. It has been said above that too often in early

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1. Besides discussion on Semitic aspects of Semitic Ethiopian in the Gründriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen (Berlin 1908-13), note also the Abessinische Studien (Berlin 1950), which contains a discussion on Cushitic elements in the lexicon.



studies of this kind etymologies were proposed on the apparent basis of mere assonance, particularly, one feels, when the "semiticness" of an item was at stake. One need only glance through some of the etymological notes that accompany most entries in Dillmann's Lexicon linguae aethiopicae<sup>1</sup>. These tend to be rather extreme examples, admittedly, but even in more carefully controlled works one wonders whether a particular etymology is being proposed at the expense of the regular sound rules, such as Praetorius' derivation of Amh. wāha 'water' from + māhaw 'flüssig'<sup>2</sup>, or Leslau's contortionate attempt to equate Amh. zāṭāñ 'nine' with Semitic tāc<sup>3</sup>. It is, of course, not my purpose to belittle or criticize the work of these scholars, rather by citing these examples I hope to urge the need for the identification of sound rules in detail, both regular and 'weak'<sup>4</sup>, and a fairly strict adherence to them once identified. It must nevertheless be accepted that languages do not always develop along absolutely regular lines throughout; secondary factors such as contamination, folk etymology, the operation of word taboos and simply sporadic and unpredictable changes have all to be taken into account. There is often some rationale behind such apparently random developments. The main reliance must, however, rest on the regular and predictable sound changes, which will be the subject of the following chapter.

The remaining part of this thesis will concentrate on the lexical material itself, firstly on a statistical survey of the dictionary and various selected texts and

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1. Lipsiae 1865.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 147.

3. Leslau, 'Notes de grammaire et d'étymologie éthiopienne', Word, V, 1949, p. 278-9.

4. For a definition of what is meant here by the term 'weak' sound change see p. 30.

secondly, in greater detail, on specific semantic fields. The figures from the dictionary analysis provide, as far as is possible, an absolute and abstract notion of the Semitic basis of the Amharic lexicon. It is just as important to obtain a more realistic notion of the make-up of the vocabulary as a working unit, that is to say taking into account relative word frequencies in connected and continuous pieces of language, and this is the purpose of the text analyses.

Whilst the semantic fields discussion is primarily concerned with similar statistical as well as extra-linguistic aspects of the composition of the lexicon from the point of view of different semantic areas, I shall take the opportunity to provide more detailed discussion on individual items, particularly wherever there is something of relevance or interest to contribute to the cultural aspect. This will, therefore, provide the beginnings of an etymological dictionary of Amharic, a project which, in its entirety, is of course beyond the scope of this thesis.

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## CHAPTER I : PHONETIC AND PHONOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The aim of this chapter is essentially to provide a sufficiently rigorous and comprehensive apparatus for the etymological work underlying the subsequent chapters. It is self-evident that before any serious etymological work can begin, one must be in a position to identify the regular sound correspondences between those languages that are known to constitute the same immediate genetic stock as the language under study. It is from this common stock that one would reasonably expect the bulk of lexical material to have been inherited, and consequently it is among these directly related languages that the researcher should look first for cognates of items from his subject language. Only armed with rules of regular sound correspondence can one place possible cognates on a firmer basis. Of course, phonetic criteria are not the only ones involved here; semantic considerations are just as important. It is, however, much more difficult to define regular and predictable processes of semantic change than of sound change<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, if only for practical purposes, phonetic considerations will typically take the first place in this kind of study, qualified wherever necessary by semantics. It should, however, be admitted that the phonetic fit (the degree of correspondence between the forms of items under comparison according to the regular rules of sound correspondence) is not always exact. Assuming the researcher has correctly worked out these rules of

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1. See below, p.100.

correspondence, including all details of context, and still the fit is not exact, then the reason for divergence could be that the item in question is to be derived from a different morphological pattern to its cognates; for example, Amh. ras 'head' cannot be related directly to Gz. rā's since the rules of correspondence show that Gz. -ā'C- regularly appears in Amharic as -āC-. Hence, for Amh. ras a protoform <sup>+</sup>rā'as has to be posited, i.e. qatal instead of qatl. Again, Amh. kəbe 'butter' cannot be related directly to Gz. kəb' as this would regularly result in Amh. <sup>+</sup>kəb. Rather, the Amharic item contains a suffix -äy > -e<sup>1</sup>.

Alternatively, the divergence of phonetic fit could be due to contamination from an item semantically or morphologically cognate to the item in question. For example, Amh. əne 'I' beside Gz. 'anā<sup>2</sup> may be explained as having final -e through contamination with the corresponding possessive suffix -e; initial ə- for expected a- may in turn be explained as due to contamination with the corresponding plural əñña. Similarly, the initial m- of Amh. mist ~ məšt beside Gz. bə'sit has been explained as due to the influence of Gz. mət 'husband'<sup>3</sup>.

Whilst major sound changes, such as those concerning the loss of laryngals or palatalization, almost without exception occur wherever the phonetic environment is right, other sound changes appear to have been applied only in restricted instances and not wherever the appropriate environment occurs. This kind of sound change may be referred to as a 'weak' sound change. A definable context

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1. The same suffix is also found on Amh. märke 'needle' : Gz. märfə and on Amh. ayyale 'many' : Gz. hayal.

2. A regular S.Ethiopian cognate of 'anā appears in Har. ān.

3. M.Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, Paris 1939, p. 421.



for the change can be identified, but the change does not occur in every instance where the context occurs. A major example of this is the fricativization of b and k in Amharic. Of course, for the etymologist seeking to explain lexical items it is enough to recognize that a particular sound change has occurred in the history of an item in order to relate that item correctly to its cognates. For example, it can be demonstrated that in the history of the Amharic item hod 'belly' the changes k > h and b > F<sup>wl</sup> have occurred, relating the item to Gz. kādd 'liver'.

On the other hand, there are instances where a familiar sound change has occurred without evidence of the appropriate triggering environment. For example, Amh. lōġ 'child' derives from something akin to Gz. lōd<sup>2</sup>, where the change d > ġ occurs apparently without the expected triggering environment of a following i or e vowel. Similarly, Amh. tōnnōġ 'small' derives from \*tō'nōs (✓'ns 'be small'); or Amh. čārāka 'moon' beside Gaf. sārāka, Ch. tānaka, etc.<sup>3</sup>, where the change s/t > č occurs without the usual palatalizing environment.

In addition, then, to regular sound change rules with clearly definable contextual restrictions, the historical phonology of Amharic requires 'weak' sound changes to be taken into consideration, along with secondary features such as contamination and unpredictable and irregular changes. The possibility of the latter, however, should not be taken as keys to the setting up of all kinds of fanciful etymologies.

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1. ie. labialization, or the rounding of the vowel (ä, â > o, u, resp.)
  2. Gz. lōdā bet 'slave born into the household'; see p.116.
  3. See p.157.

### 1. Regular sound changes

Most of the sound changes discussed here and below<sup>1</sup> have, of course, long been identified<sup>2</sup>, but in order to provide an adequate apparatus for the etymological study of the lexicon that forms the basis of this thesis, it would not, I feel, be superfluous to reiterate and elaborate on them.

1) The loss of laryngals. Ge'ez and, by implication, common Semitic Ethiopian have an inventory of five laryngeal phonemes ( ' h ḥ ʕ ħ ʁ )<sup>3</sup>, all of which are regularly lost in Amharic. The phoneme h of Amharic derives in items of inherited Semitic origin from k, as in kābd > hod 'belly', and in items taken over from Ge'ez represents h, ḥ or ʕ, as in bərhan 'light', haymanot 'faith', māṣḥaf 'book'. The evidence of Old Amharic (particularly that of Ludolf's grammar and lexicon), where items of inherited Semitic origin can be found still written with the laryngeal graphemes, does suggest that at this earlier stage of the language the Ethiopian laryngals had not all be reduced to zero. It has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that as in modern Amharic the use of these laryngeal graphemes might merely have been orthographic and that Ludolf's ḥayyā, ḥand, ḥammōst, etc., were probably pronounced as modern Amh. ayyā, and, ammōst. Whether these and similar items still maintained a laryngeal of some sort in the seventeenth century, or whether the spelling merely reflects a still older stage of the language<sup>5</sup>, it still remains that items such as ḥayyā, ḥand,

1. See p.40 ff.

2. See especially M.Cohen, Etudes d'Éthiopien méridional, Paris 1931, p. 377-403 and Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia: a comparative phonology, London 1955, passim.

3. But note Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 35, "The distinction between all the laryngeal sounds was probably strictly observed only in the most classical period of the Ge'ez language."

4. ibid., p. 40.

5. It is conceivable, especially on the evidence of those S.Ethiopian languages most closely related to Amharic, that Ludolf's h, ḥ and ʕ might reflect a single pronunciation h and that ' and ḥ might represent ' or zero.



haddis, haččär provide a direct and valuable record of the history of laryngals in Amharic<sup>1</sup>.

By the modern Amharic period all laryngals in inherited items were lost. Consequently, the apparent preservation of a laryngal in an Amharic item may be taken to indicate a take-over from or the influence of Ge'ez - a literary form or deliberate archaism. Thus, hayl, haymanot, həywät, bəläh, cf. təmhärt, a'amro, māshaf beside the regular, expected Amharic forms from the same roots, tāmarä, asammärä, tafä, should be classed as Ge'ez or "learned" loans<sup>2</sup>.

The recognition of this regular loss of laryngals also enables one to see that an item such as Amh. čohä 'shout' cannot be derived directly from a root <sup>+</sup>šwh (cf. Gz. šw<sup>c</sup>)<sup>3</sup>. It also enables one to see that an etymology such as Praetorius' <sup>+</sup>məhaw > Amh. wəha 'water'<sup>4</sup> is highly unlikely.

#### Examples of the loss of laryngals

i) initially. Amh. af 'mouth' : Gz. 'af<sup>5</sup>. Amh. əgər 'foot' : Gz. 'əgr<sup>6</sup>. Amh. ayn 'eye' : Gz. 'cayn<sup>7</sup>. Amh. ənčät 'wood' : Gz. 'cəz<sup>8</sup>. Amh. assäbä 'think' : Gz. hasäbä. Amh. attäbä 'wash' : Gz. hazäbä. Amh. aččär 'short' : Gz. hasir.

ii) in final position and non-intervocalic medial position. Amh. nəb 'bee' : Gz. nəhb<sup>9</sup>. Amh. lam 'cow' : Gz. lahm<sup>10</sup>.

1. Cf. Argobba hanğa, hand, hağəs, haçir preserving an initial laryngal.

2. See p. 54.

3. Amh. čohä, Tna. čoxä may either derive from a pseudo-correction of original h to k, or have at some stage been influenced by an Agaw form such as Khanta čawq (cf. Conti Rossini, La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, Wien 1912, p. 254.).

4. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, Halle 1879, p. 147.

5. See p. 118.

6. See p. 119.

7. See p. 119.

8. See p. 164.

9. See p. 171.

10. See p. 141.

Amh. käyy 'red' : Gz. käyih. Amh. kōnd 'forearm' :  
 Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ōrna<sup>c1</sup>. Amh. bāre 'ox' : Gz. bā<sup>c</sup>rawi ~ bā<sup>c</sup>ray<sup>2</sup>.  
 Amh. ət 'sister' : Gz. 'əht<sup>3</sup>. Amh. zār 'seed' :  
 Gz. zār<sup>4</sup>. Amh. bāg 'sheep' : Gz. bāgə<sup>c5</sup>.

In all these positions a vowel in contact with the laryngal remains unaffected by the loss of the laryngal. In a very small number of items, however, it appears that earlier -əhC- may result in Amh. -iC- as well as -əC-<sup>6</sup>. For example, Amh. ṭim beside ṭōm 'beard' : Gz. səhm; Amh. mize 'best man' from +mōhz + äy.

iii) in intervocalic position. Here the laryngal is regularly lost in Amharic and there is reduction of the two syllables -VHV- to one, -V-. Amh. ṭay 'sun' : Gz. zāhay<sup>7</sup>. Amh. sakā 'laugh' : Gz. sāhəkā. Amh. bal 'master, owner' : Gz. bā<sup>c</sup>al<sup>8</sup>. Amh. tamä 'taste good' : Gz. tə<sup>c</sup>mā ~ tā<sup>c</sup>amā. Amh. bälla 'eat' : Gz. bāl<sup>c</sup>a<sup>9</sup>.

There are not enough examples to be able to state any general rule as to how the two vowels either side of the laryngal have coalesced after the loss of the intervening laryngal. Most examples concern the reduction of -āHa- to -a-. For others, note Amh. ənṣa 'I don't know' : Gz. 'ənda<sup>c1</sup> (the Amharic form requires a metathesized + 'əndi<sup>c</sup>a); Amh. ṣul 'sharp' : Gz. səhul; Amh. was 'guarantor' from +wəḥəs; Amh. ya 'that' from zi'a.

1. See p.123.

2. See p.140.

3. See p.116.

4. See p.135.

5. See p.139.

6. This was noticed by Metzron, Ethiopian Semitic, studies in classification, Manchester 1972, p. 33 in connexion with the 1st plural independent pronoun in S.Ethiopian, but for this item see also below, p.193.

7. See p.162.

8. See p.116.

9. ie. S.Eth. +bāl(1)ā<sup>c</sup>a.



11) Palatalization. All the modern Semitic Ethiopian languages require that a feature of palatalization be included in their historical phonologies, but such is the difference in the nature and occurrence of the feature between N.Ethiopian, as represented by Tigrinya and Tigre, and S.Ethiopian as a whole, that palatalization must be treated as a separate occurrence in each of these two branches of Semitic Ethiopian. The absence of the feature in Ge'ez, at least as far as can be judged from the evidence of the orthography, suggests that palatalization in N.Ethiopian should be assigned to a date later than the establishment of the Ge'ez literary norm<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, palatalization amongst the S.Ethiopian languages would appear to be homogenous. Whether this means that the feature is to be dated to a common S.Ethiopian stage, or whether the feature has developed along parallel lines in the various subgroups of S.Ethiopian cannot be said here.

There is much underlying complexity in this feature of palatalization in Amharic. For example, it seems likely that there is more than one type of palatalization. There is also evidence in Amharic for the restitution of non-palatalized forms, both on correct and false assumptions of the history of the individual items<sup>2</sup> (ie. pseudocorrection).

The first and major palatalization may be stated diagrammatically as

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \underline{k}, \underline{t} & > \check{c} \\
 \underline{g}, \underline{d}, \underline{z} & > \check{z} \\
 \underline{t}, \underline{s}, \underline{z} & > \check{c} \\
 \underline{s} & > \check{s} \\
 \underline{n} & > \check{n} \\
 \underline{l} & > \check{y}
 \end{array}
 \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{rcl} \underline{k}, \underline{t} & > \check{c} \\ \underline{g}, \underline{d}, \underline{z} & > \check{z} \\ \underline{t}, \underline{s}, \underline{z} & > \check{c} \\ \underline{s} & > \check{s} \\ \underline{n} & > \check{n} \\ \underline{l} & > \check{y} \end{array}} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{---} \underline{l}, \underline{e}, \underline{y} (> \underline{d}, \underline{a}, \emptyset) \\ \\ \\ \text{except in word} \\ \text{initial position.} \end{array}$$

1. See Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 68.

2. Cf. modern Amh. addis 'new' beside Ludolf's haḡḡas, or Amh. källa 'be red, redden' built by false analogy on the adjective käyy taken as a palatalization of käliḥ. See Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 144, esp. note 52.

This differs from the current morphophonemic feature of palatalization in Amharic only in that the velars k and g are excluded from the latter. In addition to the developments listed above, there are a few special instances of the palatalization of different sounds, but in the same kind of environment: z > y in ya, yoh, ayyā<sup>1</sup>;  
k > š in -š<sup>2</sup>.

Here, too, may be included a more restricted set of palatalizations, identical with the main rule above except that the trigger vowel is ə: s > š in šul, šum, šənt, šənt, šəbo, šənkurt<sup>3</sup>;  
z > ž in žəb, žəgra<sup>4</sup>;  
t > č in čəkal<sup>5</sup>;  
k > č in yəčəl (čalā)<sup>6</sup>;  
t/s > č in čəčət, čəka<sup>7</sup>.

A further small set concerns the palatalization of k to č, found in the items čən, mənč, ənčət, wərč<sup>8</sup>. Dialectal examples of this palatalization also occur: bačāla beside bakela 'bean', čās beside kəs 'priest', dočāt beside doket 'flour', alawač beside alawaki 'ignorant'<sup>9</sup>.

Examples of the main palatalization rule.

k > č Amh. čär 'kind' : Tna. ker (pseudocorrection, cf. Gz. her). Amh. wärč 'flask' from wärke<sup>10</sup>.

t > č Amh. mäče ~ mäčä ~ mäč 'when' from mäte<sup>11</sup>.

Amh. ənči ~ ənč 'you' (fem.sg.) : Gz. 'anti. Amh. bəčča 'only' from bəht + yə<sup>12</sup>.

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1. ie. zi'a > ya; zikä > yoh; /hzy > ayyā. For the same change z > y in yä- and əyyä- see below, p.197, 200, resp.
  2. ie. 2nd feminine singular verbal and nominal suffix, Gz. -ki.
  3. ie. səhul > šul; səyum > šum; sənt > šənt; səmt > šənt; səhbo > šəbo; sənkwert > šənkurt.
  4. ie. zə'b > žəb; zəgra > žəgra.
  5. təkal > čəkal.
  6. yəkəl > yəčəl, Gz. /khl.
  7. səšət > čəčət; for čəka see p.156.
  8. ie. possibly kən > čən; mənək > mənč; 'anket > ənčət; wərək > wərč.
  9. See M.Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, cont.)



- g > ǵ Amh. ǵnǵāra 'bread' : Tna. 'ǵngera<sup>1</sup>.  
 Amh. ǵnǵi contrastive particle, from hǵ(n)gi<sup>2</sup>.
- d > ǵ Amh. ǵǵ 'hand' : Gz. 'ǵde-<sup>3</sup>. Amh. dǵǵ :  
 Gz. dede<sup>4</sup>. Amh. ǵnǵa 'I don't know' from 'ǵndi<sup>5</sup>.
- t, s, z > č Amh. nǵčč 'white' from nǵsih. Amh. čǵw  
 'salt' : Gz. sew<sup>6</sup>. Amh. kunǵčča 'flea' from  
k<sup>w</sup>ǵns + ya<sup>7</sup>.
- s > š Amh. mǵšt 'wife' from mǵsit, Gz. bǵ'sit<sup>8</sup>.  
 Amh. šǵbǵt 'gray hair' : Gz. šibǵt.<sup>9</sup> Amh. ǵrša  
 'ploughed land' from hǵrs + ya<sup>10</sup>.
- n > ñ Amh. sǵñño 'Monday' from sǵnyu/o (metathesized  
 from Gz. sǵnuy). Amh. kǵñ 'right' from kǵni<sup>11</sup>.  
 Amh. ǵfǵñ 'handful' from hǵfne<sup>12</sup>.
- l > y Amh. lay 'upon' : Gz. la<sup>c</sup>le-. Amh. dǵngǵya  
 'rock' from dǵngǵl + ya<sup>13</sup>. Amh. ayb 'cheese' from  
 Gz. halib<sup>14</sup>. Amh. tǵvyǵm 'dark' : Gz. sǵllim.

9. cont.) Paris 1939, p. 36.

10. See Wajenberg, 'Dualreste und Dualspuren im Neuabessinischen',  
 RO, XIII, 1937, p. 19-23.

11. See p. 202.

12. See p. 201.

1. See p. 143.

2. See p. 200.

3. See p. 119.

4. See p. 148.

5. See p. 200.

6. See p. 144.

7. See p. 171.

8. See p. 117.

9. See p. 126.

10. See p. 133.

11. See p. 124.

12. Cf. Tna. hǵfni, see Wajenberg, op.cit.

13. See p. 157.

14. See p. 143.

The second palatalization in Amharic is conditioned by the vowel e, deriving from earlier äy or ay. There are unfortunately not many examples of this palatalization and consequently all that can be said about it here is that its distribution differs from the first palatalization in that the range of consonants subject to this change is fewer in number; possibly only the dentals t, ʈ, s/z and g are to be included here<sup>1</sup>.

Exx: Amh. ənčät 'wood' from <sup>+</sup>cə(n)s/zäyt<sup>2</sup>.

Amh. əšät 'unripe grain' from <sup>+</sup>säy(i)t<sup>3</sup>. Amh. māče 'when' from <sup>+</sup>mäte<sup>4</sup>.

Without palatalization note Amh. ayyale from <sup>+</sup>hayal + ay. Amh. aroge 'old man' : Gz. 'arägay<sup>5</sup>. Amh. mize 'best man' from <sup>+</sup>möhz + ay/äy.

A few items in Amharic show the change s > š conditioned not by a palatal vowel, but by o or äw. This is immediately reminiscent of the shifting of s to š in Tigrinya in a labial context<sup>6</sup>.

Exx: Amh. šola 'fig tree' from <sup>+</sup>sobla<sup>7</sup>. Amh. šotäl 'sabre' : Gz. säwtäl. Amh. šoṭ in šoṭ adärrägä 'flog' : Gz. säwt 'whip'. Amh. əšoh 'thorn' : Gz. šok<sup>8</sup>.

Similarly, there is one probable example of s > š before o in Amharic, namely čohä 'shout' from <sup>+</sup>sokä, perhaps, cf. Tna. čoxä.

The feature of palatalization in the history of Amharic is complicated and erratic. What is apparent from the

1. If the 1st person singular suffix -e is to be derived from -äy (cf. Tna. -äy, -ey, etc.), then gerundive forms like gädöyve from <sup>+</sup>gädiläy beside forms like ayyale 'many' without the change l > y require explanation. It is probable that the morphological feature of palatalization in the verbal paradigm has influenced the feature in the gerundive here.

2. See p.164.

3. See p.136.

4. See p.202.

5. See p.112; Amh. aroge derives from <sup>+</sup>'aräg<sup>w</sup>ay.

6. See Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, London 1955, p. 137.

7. See p.165.

8. See p.164.



examples is that palatalization in N.Ethiopian and in S.Ethiopian is an independent, though often parallel feature. The evidence suggests that for Amharic we must envisage not one, but probably several occurrences of palatalization over a period of time with occasional restitution of non-palatalized forms. We also have to allow for a considerable degree of levelling, especially in verbal paradigms, where under the influence of System-zwang a palatalized segment has spread throughout the paradigm. A case in point concerns roots with original third radical y. For example, Amh. māššā 'become evening' from /msy, aččā 'betroth' from /hzy, waññā 'swim' from /wny, fäṣṣā 'destroy' from /fdy, where the best explanation is that the palatalized medial radical spread throughout the paradigm from some such form as the imperfective, or the gerundive, where appropriate conditions for palatalization are met: yōmäs(s)i, yähaz(z)i, yəwan(n)i, yəfäd(d)i > yōmäs, yač, yəwañ, yəfäṣ.

It is appropriate to mention here also that the palatals š, č, š/z and č occur in Cushitic, especially Agaw loans in Amharic, both as taken directly from the source language and as the regular developments of s, t, z, d, and s/t. Thus, whilst cognates of Amh. čāw 'salt' show that this item was originally taken into Semitic Ethiopian as sew (so in Ge'ez) and consequently that the change s > č is subsequent to the borrowing, in items such as Amh. čamma 'sole of the foot, shoe' it is evident that borrowing took place from a particular source (Southern Agaw) in a form already with č<sup>1</sup>. This is, of course, an important means of dating loans relative to one another.

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1. Southern Agaw čammi; the rest of Agaw has initial š- or s-, pointing to a common Agaw form \*sanb-. See p.120.

## 2. Weak sound changes

1) Fricativization. The first of those sound changes in Amharic that occur only in a restricted set of items and not everywhere the appropriate phonetic environment occurs concerns the weakening of an original k, b, or m. In each case the process of weakening is such that the overall feature may be described as fricativization. The developments are as follows: k > h

b > w ~ F<sup>w</sup> ~  $\emptyset$

m > w.

The term 'fricativization' is not merely a convenient label; it does describe the underlying process involved here.

This may be further clarified when one recalls that in Tigrinya the phoneme k has a fricative allophone x in postvocalic position, or that in Amharic the phoneme b has a fricative allophone in certain environments<sup>1</sup>.

These facts are, of course, "taken from the synchronic dimension, but they are not without relevance in describing the diachronic feature of fricativization. I have chosen to include the few examples of m > w and the one possible instance of m > F<sup>w</sup> here, too, not only because the phonetic environment involved is basically the same as for k > h and b > w, etc., but also because the process here is likely to have been one of fricativization and, of course, denasalization.

The phonetic environment for all three changes is the same: word initial followed by a vowel and medial post-vocalic. There is, as far as I can discover, only one example of fricativization in an environment contrary to

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1. Cf. M.Cohen, Traité de langue amharique, 2nd ed., Paris 1970, p. 31 and for a fuller discussion, Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia? London 1955, p. 97-101.



these, namely Amh. arat 'four' : Gz. 'arba'<sup>1</sup>.

These three sound changes occur throughout S.Ethiopian and there are parallels in Tigrinya<sup>2</sup>.

Exx: k > h i) initially Amh. hullu 'all' : Gz. k<sup>w</sup>əllu. Amh. hod 'belly' : Gz. kābd 'liver'<sup>3</sup>. Amh. haya 'twenty' from +kəl'e + ya<sup>4</sup>. Amh. hulāt 'two' : Gz. kəl'etu. Amh. honä 'become' : Gz. konä. Amh. h<sup>w</sup>ala 'behind' : Gz. kāwala ~ kəwala. Amh. hedä 'go' : Gz. kedä 'tread'.

ii) postvocally Amh. əṣoh 'thorn' : Gz. śok<sup>5</sup>. Amh. yəh 'this' from +zikä<sup>6</sup>. Amh. wəha 'water' from +ək<sup>w</sup>a<sup>7</sup>. Amh. zāhon 'elephant' from +zāk<sup>w</sup>än<sup>8</sup>.

As in the case of palatalization, there is evidence for the restitution of the original, or supposed original stop phoneme. In some instances the stop k and the result of fricativization h still alternate in modern Amharic.

Exx: Amh. -k<sup>w</sup> ~ -h<sup>w</sup> 1st singular perfective : Gz. -ku. Amh. -k ~ -h 2nd singular masculine perfective and possessive : Gz. -kä. Amh. yahəl 'about' (lit. '(which) equals') and yakəl 'it equals' (/ 'kl). Amh. mākakkäl ~ mähakkäl 'middle' (/ 'kl). Amh. kä- ~ hā- 'from, by, with' : Gz. kä-. Amh. əkäle ~ əhäle 'so-and-so'<sup>9</sup>. Old Amh. həlalit 'kidney' : mod.Amh. kulalit<sup>10</sup>.

In the following examples k has replaced an etymologically 'correct' h by pseudocorrection:

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1. Other S.Ethiopian languages show the same development: Sod. arät, S.W. arat, Z. arät, Har. harat, but Arg. arbit, Gaf. arbattä, Ch. arbät.
  2. See Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 93-6.
  3. See p.123.
  4. See p.195.
  5. See p.164.
  6. See p.193.
  7. See p.162.
  8. See p.173.
  9. See M.Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p.37.
  10. See p.123.

Amh. kābt 'cattle' beside hābt 'wealth' (Gz./whb).

Amh. čār 'kind' from ker beside Gz. her. Amh. bokka 'ferment', cf. Tna. bāx<sup>w</sup>ce, beside Gz. bōh'a<sup>1</sup>.

Amh. čohā from čokā, cf. Tna. čoxā, for č/wh : Gz. sw<sup>c</sup>.

Examples of the fricativization of b show three distinct stages: i) b > w; ii) b > F<sup>w</sup>; iii) b >  $\emptyset$ . There would appear to be no differentiating feature in the phonetic environments under which each of these operate to account for the varying developments.

b > w Amh. sāw 'man' : Gz. sāb'<sup>2</sup>. Amh. təwat (t<sup>w</sup>at) 'morning' from šəbaht<sup>3</sup>. Here, too, can be included dialectal variants like leba ~ lewa 'thief' and addis awa beside addis abāba.

b > F<sup>w</sup> Amh. hod 'belly' : Gz. kābd 'liver'<sup>4</sup>. Amh. tut 'breast' from təbt<sup>5</sup>. Amh. dur 'forest' from dəbr<sup>6</sup>. Also, note Amh. morād 'file' (/brd); Amh. norā 'dwell' (/nbr); Amh. aydollām 'is not' probably from a root /dbl.

b >  $\emptyset$  Amh. tat 'finger' from šāb<sup>c</sup>at<sup>7</sup>. Amh. set 'woman', cf. Tna. sābāyti<sup>8</sup>. Amh. arat 'four' : Gz. 'arba<sup>c</sup>tu. Amh. mata 'evening' perhaps from mā/əbeta<sup>9</sup>. Amh. šola 'fig tree' from sobla<sup>10</sup>. Amh. ayat 'grandparent' from cabiy + at<sup>11</sup>. There are two examples of b >  $\emptyset$  in initial position: Amh. alā 'say' : Gz. bāhlā and Amh. alā 'without' from bālā<sup>12</sup>.

1. See p.144.

3. See p.162.

5. See p.128.

7. See p.127.

9. See p.160.

10. See p.115.

2. See p.113.

4. See p.123.

6. See p.158.

8. See p.112.

10. See p.165.

12. See p.198.



Existing side by side in Amharic, moreover, are forms like əmmete and əmmäbete 'my lady, mistress' and the corresponding ato and abeto. Note also täbib beside täyəb 'sorcerer, magician'<sup>1</sup> and the noun ərat 'supper' beside the verb tarräbä (/Arb) 'have supper'<sup>2</sup>.

The Amharic examples of m > w mostly concern the deverbal formative mä- which occasionally becomes wä-<sup>3</sup>. For example, Amh. wämbär 'seat' : Gz. mānbär; Amh. wäfčo 'mill' beside Old Amh. məfč; Amh. wänčəf 'whip' : Gz. možäf.

The change m > w occurs in medial position in the following items: Amh. əwnät 'truth' : Gz. 'əmnät 'belief'; Amh. -äw 3rd plural gerundive suffix and -aččäw possessive and object suffix from <sup>+</sup>-(ati)ämu, cf. Gz. -omu; Amh. -aččəhu 2nd plural suffix from <sup>+</sup>-ati + -kum, cf. Gz. -kəmmu. The pronoun antu shows a similar development, cf. Gz. 'antəmmu. Note also that in Amh. wäyəmə(m) 'or' : Gz. wämimmä the first m must have weakened to w and then to y under the influence of the following i vowel<sup>4</sup>.

ii) The remaining sound changes to be discussed under the heading of 'weak sound changes' occur only in a very small number of items. They do not necessarily occur in every item where the appropriate phonetic environment is found; in fact, it is not always possible to define a specific environment in each case. For example, it would be difficult, if not futile, to try and specify an environment for such changes as metathesis, sporadic vowel harmony, and so forth.

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1. See M.Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

2. See p.143.

3. For a fuller discussion see M.Cohen, *Etudes d'éthiopien méridional*, p. 389ff.

4. See p.204.

An especially interesting sound change in Amharic, as in other Semitic Ethiopian languages, concerns the insertion of an 'intrusive' nasal, whereby an n occasionally appears in the context ...V—CV..., where C can apparently be any dental or velar<sup>1</sup>. This phenomenon is especially common in S.Ethiopian, but its occurrence is not necessarily matched item for item throughout S.Ethiopian and cannot, therefore, be reconstructed for individual items at a common level. There are differences even between Amharic and Argobba, the closest of the S.Ethiopian languages to Amharic. For example, note Amh. əgər 'foot', but Arg. ingir; Amh. əḡ 'hand', but Arg. əṅḡ; Amh. ayyā 'he saw', but Arg. hangā. This feature of an intrusive nasal occurs in other Asiatic Semitic languages and is usually explained as the dissolution of a geminate<sup>2</sup>. In many of the Semitic Ethiopian cases, however, there is no evidence of an original geminate. Exx: Amh. and 'one' : Gz. 'ahadu. Amh. ḥənkurt 'onion' from <sup>+</sup>sək<sup>w</sup>ərt, cf. Gz. səḡ<sup>w</sup>ərd<sup>3</sup>. Amh. ənčāt 'wood' from <sup>+</sup>cəs/zəyt, cf. Gz. cəz<sup>4</sup>. Amh. māns 'winnowing pan' : Gz. mās<sup>c</sup>e<sup>5</sup>. Amh. wänd 'male' : Gz. wäld 'son'<sup>6</sup>. Amh. zənḡäro 'baboon', cf. Har. zägäru. But compare Amh. dənk<sup>w</sup>an 'tent' from Ar. dukkān. Amh. fänta 'share' from the root /ftt. In a small number of items original -aC- develops into -ānC- and not -anC-. Exx: wānz 'river' from <sup>+</sup>waz (/w<sup>h</sup>z). Amh. zändəro 'last year' from <sup>+</sup>za + dəro, perhaps<sup>7</sup>. Amh. mändär 'village' from <sup>+</sup>madär (/bdr).

1. I cannot find any examples of an intrusive nasal before a labial in Amharic, but there are examples from other S.Eth. languages: Ch. anf 'mouth', Ch. ānf 'bird', Gaf. ənfawā 'odour' (cf. Gz. 'af, Cof, 'afāw, resp.).

2. Brockelmann, Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen, p. 243 ff.

3. See p.139.

4. See p.164.

5. See p.134.

6. See p.113; the sequence here may, however, be wäld > wädd > wänd.

7. See Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 29.



In a small number of items an original cluster -rn- becomes -nd- in Amharic, whilst other S.Ethiopian languages variously show -rr-, -r-, -n- and -nd-; N.Ethiopian preserves the original -rn- cluster.

Exx: Amh. kānd 'horn' : Gz. kārn<sup>1</sup>. Amh. kōnd 'forearm' : Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ōrnac<sup>2</sup>. Amh. sōnde 'wheat' : Gz. šōrnay<sup>3</sup>. Amh. andābāt 'tongue' from \*arnābāt, cf. Har. arrāt, Ch. anābāt<sup>4</sup>. Amh. kōndōb 'eyebrow' : Gz. kōrnōb.

The Semitic diphthongs ay and aw appear in Ge'ez both as the single vowels e and o and as the diphthongs äy and äw. The process of monophthongalization begun in the pre-Ge'ez history of Semitic Ethiopian, continues into Amharic, where Ge'ez diphthongs appear as single vowels.

Exx: Amh. bāre 'ox' : Gz. bō<sup>c</sup>ray. Amh. geta 'master' from g<sup>w</sup>äyta<sup>5</sup>. Amh. sōnde 'wheat' : Gz. šōrnay. Amh. ənčāt 'wood' from \*cōsāyt. Similarly in nize 'best man', aroge 'old man', set 'woman', kəbe 'butter', täre 'raw', ayyale 'many', əšāt 'unripe grain', etc. For äw > o compare Amh. mado 'the other side' from ma<sup>c</sup>dāw, cf. Gz. ma<sup>c</sup>dot (/Cdw); Amh. šotāl 'sabre' : Gz. sāwtāl; Amh. šot adārrägä 'flog' : Gz. šāwt 'whip'. Here, too, can be included the imperfective of verbs such as hedä : yəhod, honä : yəhon; Gz. kedä : yəkäyyəd, konä : yəkäwwən, resp.

Immediately after an old laryngal, however, the change äy > e seems not to have occurred in Amharic, though it does

1. See p.171.

2. See p.123.

3. See p.138.

4. See p.118.

5. Cf. Tna. g<sup>w</sup>äyta; see p.180.

occur in other S.Ethiopian languages.

Exx: Amh. ayn 'eye' : Gz. ᶜayn, but Arg. en.

Amh. ayt 'mouse', cf. Old Amh. hays, but Arg. hent.

Amh. ṭay 'sun' : Gz. zähay, but Arg. ṣəhed.

The only apparent exception to this rule is the interrogative adverb yet 'where', which derives from <sup>+</sup>'ayt, cf. Gz. 'ayte<sup>1</sup>. This might be explained as having spread from close compounds with prepositional elements such as wädet 'where to', əndet 'how', etc., in which the ' of the interrogative would be likely to have been dropped early: <sup>+</sup>wä'əd(ä)+'ayt > <sup>+</sup>wädäyt > wädet, just as in Tigrinya <sup>+</sup>säb'ayt > säbäyti and kəl'etä > kələttä.

Finally, we may note that a number of items in Amharic show assimilation, or harmony between vowels in adjacent syllables.

Exx: Amh. haya beside höya 'twenty' from <sup>+</sup>kəl'e+ya.

Amh. bäre from bə<sup>c</sup>ray. Amh. mäto 'hundred' beside

Old Amh. (Ludolf) mə'to. Amh. zätäñ 'nine' beside

Old Amh. zəhtäñ.

Similarly, in the presence of a labial consonant the vowels ä and ə may be rounded to o and u, respectively.

Exx: Amh. molla 'fill' beside mälla.

Amh. bokka 'ferment' from <sup>+</sup>bäkkä, cf. Tna. bäx<sup>w</sup>ce.

Amh. doket 'flour' beside older däk<sup>w</sup>et.

Amh. əffuñit 'viper' from <sup>+</sup>əffən+it, cf. Har. ḥiffiñ<sup>2</sup>.

It has already been indicated above<sup>3</sup> that the consonants š, č, č̣ and ž/ḡ occur in items of Cushitic origin both as the regular, internal Amharic development of earlier s, t,

1. See p. 204.

2. See p. 168.

3. See p. 39.



s/z, z and d and as taken directly from the source language. This naturally leads to the question whether there are any formal phonetic criteria for distinguishing a loanword in Amharic from an inherited Semitic item. The evidence would seem to suggest that there is not, or rather that there is no absolute phonetic criterion to indicate a loanword. It would, nevertheless, appear that the presence of certain phonemes and especially the palatals č and ž/ǰ, in certain positions at least, suggests a loan rather than an inherited item. Thus, of the items with initial č or ž/ǰ as listed in the dictionary<sup>1</sup>, the majority of those whose source is readily identifiable is in each case Cushitic. On the other hand, the majority of roots in initial r, w, h and f, for example, is of inherited Semitic origin.

So far in this chapter only individual phonematic units and their controlled developments within the history of Amharic have been discussed. Whilst the main purpose in outlining these developments in the form of sound rules has been to provide an adequate apparatus for the etymological study of the lexicon, the possibility of using phonetic criteria directly in the identification of the origin of a given lexical item has also been raised. Though it appears from what has been said above that one cannot look to the individual phonemes as keys to loanword identification, the presence of certain phonemes such as the palatals č and ž/ǰ, on the basis of statistical evidence alone, could be construed as suggestive of a loan.

The next level in the hierarchy of structural analysis, the morphophonemic level of root structure, being more

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1. See p.69 ff.

intimately connected with the morphological 'heart' of the structure of the language, might be expected to provide an even more decisive indication of root origins. This is, perhaps, especially valid in the case of Semitic languages. It has long been a noted feature of Semitic root structure that radical consonants cannot combine in any random sequence, but the choice of consonants in each of the radical positions,  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  in particular, is governed by a broadly definable set of compatibility rules roughly according to the point of articulation<sup>1</sup>. These rules were, in the first place, worked out for Classical Arabic, but appear to apply in varying degrees to all Semitic languages and constitute a fundamental typological feature of the Semitic family of languages. Apparent contradictions in Ge'ez, for example, can be explained as due to the obscuring factor of individual phonetic developments. For example, Gz./ssl 'leave' derives by assimilation in the  $R_2R_3$  position from a quadriliteral /slsl (cf. Amh. sälässälä 'grow weak'); similarly, Gz. /śś<sup>C</sup> 'be fine' is for /śś<sup>C</sup>, or Gz. /kk<sub>y</sub> 'be mean' for /kyky, or Gz. /glg ('angälägä) 'gather' for /glgl<sup>2</sup>. The number of such apparent exceptions to the Semitic rule of root composition is increased when one turns to Amharic. Here, too, some are plainly due to the obscuring phonetic developments of the kind seen above; thus, Amh. /kk<sub>l</sub> 'cook' from /klkl (cf. /klA 'roast'), Amh. /ddk 'pound earth' from /dkdk (cf. /dkk 'be finely ground'), Amh. /ttg 'burn'

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1. See J.Greenberg, 'The patterning of root morphemes in Semitic', Word, VI, 1950, p. 162-81; also J.Kurylowicz, Studies in Semitic grammar and metrics, London 1973, p. 6-31.

2. See S.Strelcyn, 'Les racines trilitères à première et troisième radicales identiques dans les langues sémitiques de l'Ethiopie', GLECS, IV, 1945-8, p. 86-8; also 'Les racines trilitères à première et deuxième radicales identiques: a. en hébreu; b. en guèze et en amharique', ibid., p. 88-9.



beside /tətg/, Amh. /ššā 'flee' from <sup>+</sup>/sysy (cf. Gz. /swws/). Not all, however, can be explained in this way.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, given that it is a fundamental feature of Semitic that there are definable patterns of root and particularly verb root composition<sup>2</sup>, then roots occurring in Semitic Ethiopian that contravene these rules and cannot be explained as secondary developments, might reasonably be expected to have come from a non-Semitic source where such rules do not apply. Indeed, noun roots in Amharic like k<sup>w</sup>ank<sup>w</sup>a 'tongue', which contravenes the restriction on R<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub>R<sub>1</sub><sup>3</sup>, and lole 'servant', sāsa 'species of antelope', koḵ 'partridge', duda 'mute', toṭa 'species of monkey', čačut 'chick', all of which contravene the restriction on R<sub>1</sub>R<sub>1</sub>(R<sub>2</sub>), are of readily demonstrable Cushitic origin. The only Amharic verb roots with the pattern R<sub>1</sub>R<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub> for which a possible Cushitic origin can be identified are /tṭā 'drink' and /ggr 'bake bread'<sup>4</sup>. This leaves verb roots like ssn 'commit adultery', ššg 'hide', ḵḵr 'direct one's ears towards a sound', ddb 'become callused' and tṭt 'repent' which can neither be explained as assimilations from quadrilaterals nor as loans.

As in the case of the phonemes č and ž/ǵ, these apparently "un-Semitic" patterns are not necessarily prima facie evidence of non-Semitic origin. Indeed, there is some evidence that similar rules of root

1. See R. Cowley, 'A and B verbal stem-type in Amharic', JES, VII, 1969, p. 3.

2. Exceptions to the rule can always be found and are not indeed lacking in common Semitic forms, particularly in primary noun roots like nwn, tṭt, lyl, but note also the verb root ntn.

3. These are, admittedly, noun roots.

4. For Amh. tṭṭa compare Tna. sāsāwā 'gulp'; Amh. ggr may, however, be a denominal formation from 'ən-gera.

composition occur in other Hamito-Semitic languages. Greenberg<sup>1</sup> already demonstrated the validity of some of the rules worked out for Semitic to Egyptian root composition. If this represents a common Hamito-Semitic feature, then traces should exist in precisely those languages from which the bulk of non-Semitic material in the Amharic lexicon was taken, that is in the Cushitic languages. It does, in fact, appear that  $R_1R_1(R_2)$  and other root composition restrictions occur in Agaw, Sidamo and Galla, and certainly in Beja, though not, perhaps, as clearly or as rigorously as in Semitic.<sup>2</sup> Of course, similar considerations of assimilation and sound change as have been described above in connexion with Semitic Ethiopian may have applied in Cushitic. It still remains clear, however, that if root composition rules apply in various Cushitic languages in the same way as in Semitic, then the usefulness of this criterion in distinguishing loans in the Amharic lexicon is somewhat diminished.

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1. Greenberg, op.cit., p. 179 ff.

2. See M.L.Bender, 'Consonant co-occurrence restrictions in Afroasiatic verb roots', paper read at the Second International Conference on Afroasiatic Comparative Linguistics, Florence April 16-19, 1974.



## CHAPTER II : STATISTICAL SURVEY

This chapter will examine the distribution of roots according to their various origins, firstly as listed in alphabetical sequence in the dictionary and secondly as occurring in several sample texts of varying date, subject matter and style. For the purpose of the lexicon survey Guidi's Vocabolario amarico-italiano<sup>1</sup> was used. It is not, of course, intended to imply that the entire lexical stock of Amharic is recorded there. However, the corpus of a little under 2000 roots<sup>2</sup> listed in the Vocabolario does include most roots of all but the rarest occurrence, and certainly all roots of any significant frequency, and as such may be taken as a workable and representative corpus of the Amharic lexicon. Roots, for example, occurring in the texts but not recorded in the Vocabolario were for the most part of recent European origin, like fotograf, dōrektōr, propaganda, etc., but in each case were of such low frequency (1/2000 or 2/2000) as to be of little overall significance in the statistical count.

The notion of 'root' employed here generally coincides with an indented entry in the Vocabolario. However, homophonic roots like srA 'work' and srA 'prescribe, decree'<sup>3</sup> are listed separately here when etymological support can be given to the different meanings. Thus, srA 'work' is

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1. Roma, 1901 and Supplemento al vocabolario amarico-italiano, Roma 1940.

2. For an explanation of what is meant by the term 'root' see below.

3. In all but purely nominal roots only the radical pattern has been written here. The upper-case vowel letters A, Ā, E, O represent the various vocalic 'radicals' deriving from original laryngals and semivowels. Thus srA 'work' = Gz. srh; hEd 'go' = Gz. kyd; kOm 'stand' = Gz. kwm; krĀ 'remain' = Sem.Eth. kry. The same patterns are, of course, also morphologically distinct and relevant in Amharic.

to be equated with Gz. srh, whilst srA 'prescribe' can be related with Gz. śr<sup>C</sup>. Similarly, sAl (i) 'paint', (ii) 'cough', (iii) 'sharpen' have been counted separately as derived from śCl, s<sup>C</sup>l and shl, respectively. On the other hand, certain items are listed separately in the Vocabolario, where phonetic divergence has obscured their derivation from the same root. For example, hulät(t) 'two' and haya 'twenty', or lela 'other' and lyÄ (läyyä) 'separate', derive from the same two original roots, k<sup>(w)</sup>l' and l(y)ly, respectively, and have, therefore, been listed together here and not separately as in the Vocabolario.

Roots have been classified according to origin under the following headings.

1. Inherited Semitic. This group, which constitutes by far the largest section of identifiable roots in the lexicon, includes all those items for which a satisfactory formal and semantic etymology can be found from amongst the scatter of the other Semitic languages according to the principles set out in the previous chapter. This, therefore, excludes roots whose phonetic structure indicates a take-over from Ge'ez, such as hāywät 'life', whd (tāwahadä) 'be united', hābōst 'eucharistic bread', etc. However, an item whose form indicates Ge'ez influence or origin but which, nevertheless, is clearly relatable to a formally genuine Amharic root has not been listed separately, but has been included under the Amharic root. For example, tōmhört 'education' from mAr (tāmarä) 'learn', ṣōhfät 'document' from ṭAf 'write', hābrät 'union' from Abr 'join', etc.<sup>1</sup> Also excluded from the inherited Semitic group are

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1. Ge'ez-type and Amharic-type forms of the same items often exist side by side, as ṭōfät beside ṣōhfät, bahör and bar 'lake, sea', ba'äd and bad 'stranger', mäl'ak and mälak 'angel'.



roots whose form may have close or even exact correspondences in other Semitic languages, but which lack a sufficient degree of semantic correlation to allow the equation of the Ethiopian and Semitic items. It has, indeed, always been one of the problems of historical and comparative linguistics that semantic development cannot be described as adequately and be codified in the form of 'rules' as rigidly as, for example, phonetic development. The linguist is still to some extent thrown back on to the subjectivity of his own intuition, however well that may be grounded in a knowledge of developments in other languages. Nevertheless, it is often possible, with the explanation of such processes as the widening and narrowing of the semantic field of an item<sup>1</sup>, the operation of taboo, euphemism, the polarization of meaning, analogy and substitution due to obsolescence, safely to connect formally relatable items on the semantic level as well. For example, Amh. ba'əd ~ bad 'stranger' (Gz. b<sup>c</sup>d) : Ar. ba<sup>c</sup>uda 'be far off'; Amh. wll (täwällälä) 'be grief stricken' : Heb. yll (heyli) 'give a shout, lament'; Amh. dfr 'be bold, dare' : Ar. dfr 'push'; Amh. hod 'stomach' : Gz. käbd 'liver'; Amh. gdl 'kill' : Ar. ǧdl (ǧādala) 'quarrel', Heb. gdl 'be great'; Amh. ḳṭa 'punish', Gz. ḳṣ<sup>c</sup> : Ar. qd<sup>c</sup> 'tame'; and so on. These are, of course, fairly simple examples, but they serve to illustrate the principles involved. Nevertheless, in spite of these processes of semantic development, it remains exceedingly difficult to relate, on a semantic level, roots like Amh. flg 'seek, want' and Gz. flg 'flow in torrents'<sup>2</sup>, common Sem.Eth. ḳb' ~ ḳb<sup>c</sup>

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1. ie. such as may be covered by metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, litotes, degeneration and elevation. See Bloomfield, Language, New York 1933, p. 426-7.

2. Gz. flg is readily relatable to common Semitic plg meaning 'river', etc.

'anoint, grease' and Heb. qb<sup>C</sup> 'fix', Akk. gabû 'say'<sup>1</sup>, where the phonetic fit is exact. Such items have not been included, therefore, under the heading 'inherited Semitic', but have been classified as unidentified, though formally, at least, they appear to be perfectly 'respectable' and reasonable Semitic roots. Precisely because of the inability to draw up regular rules of semantic development, it is always possible to devise arguments to relate two items like Sem.Eth. kb' ~ kb<sup>C</sup> and Heb. qb<sup>C</sup>, etc., to which objection can really only be raised on the grounds of what seems likely. Hence, it is almost inevitable that some items that have been excluded here from the inherited Semitic group can be argued to be of Semitic origin after all. However, the position of the individual item is not as relevant here as the overall picture of the make-up of the lexicon. Whether 720, 725 or 730 roots out of a total of 1800 are described as inherited Semitic, whether kbA is counted as Semitic or not, is not as important to this survey as the statement that approximately 40% of the roots in the Vocabolario are of inherited Semitic origin.

2. Ge'ez. The criteria for classifying a root as a Ge'ez take-over have been referred to above. As the presence of an original laryngeal in a root is really the only formal indication of a 'learned', Ge'ez take-over as against an inherited Semitic item<sup>2</sup>, the number of roots that can be so classified is necessarily small: 32 out of 1809 (1.76%).

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1. so according to Leslau, Ethiopic and South Arabic contributions to the Hebrew lexicon, Los Angeles 1958, p. 46.

2. This, of course, excludes cases of h in Amharic derived from an original k, as in hod, hEd, hulät(t), etc.



3. Loans from other Semitic languages. Two levels of borrowing from other Semitic languages can be identified. The first level, which is the older, consists of items that entered Semitic Ethiopian through Ge'ez from Aramaic and Hebrew, evidently during the first centuries of the Christian era and the subsequent period of Christianization in Ethiopia<sup>1</sup>. Such items are mostly religious terms, like haymanot 'faith', tabot 'ark', zmr 'sing psalms', sgd 'prostrate o.s.', şly 'pray', etc.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the majority of these loans appear to be of Jewish Aramaic provenance and are consequently not originally distinctively Christian in connotation<sup>3</sup>, confirming from a linguistic angle the spread of Judaic influence into Ethiopia via South Arabia before the advent of Christianity. Conversely, only four items are characteristically Christian in meaning and attributable to a specifically Syriac source<sup>4</sup>. Most of these items belong, of course, to the stock of 'learned' words in Amharic, subject to the archaizing influence of Ge'ez in the preservation of original laryngals, as in haymanot, māl'ak, haṭi'at. The only real exception in which the Amharic item has developed independently of the form recorded in Ge'ez is kes, dialect čäs, 'priest', beside Gz. käsis<sup>5</sup>, which has plainly not been subject to the conservative influence of the 'classical' language,

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1. The linguistic interaction of Semitic Ethiopian and Aramaic/Hebrew has been discussed in detail, first by Nöldeke in his Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, Strassburg 1910, p. 32-46, then by Polotsky in 'Aramaic, Syriac and Ge'ez', JSS, IX, p. 1-10, and by Ullendorff in Ethiopia and the Bible, London 1968, p. 120-5.

2. See p. 175 ff.

3. See especially Polotsky, op.cit., p. 10.

4. See Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 124.

5. See p. 190.

The second level of Semitic loans in Amharic consists of items of Arabic origin<sup>1</sup>. Included under this heading are several items which are themselves loans in Arabic, mainly from a Turkish or occasionally Persian or Greek source, but which most likely entered Amharic through the medium of Arabic and not directly from the ultimate source language. As examples of such items one may cite tābānṣa 'rifle', baša military title, sāndāk 'flagpole', all of which are ultimately of Turkish origin. Many of these terms taken from Arabic are connected with warfare, commerce or the products of commerce. Of the 326 items listed by Leslau (the specifically Arabic origin of all of which is not always above doubt, and which do not all appear to be current in Amharic as a whole), approximately 20 are military terms, 55 are commercial terms and over 120 designate what may be categorized as luxury or exotic items, such as might be expected to be introduced through trade. In addition to these three particularly prominent semantic areas of Arabic loans, a number of terms from a more 'learned' sphere of vocabulary are of Arabic origin. Amongst these are included a number of magico-religious terms, like kōtab 'amulet', Azm 'practise witchcraft', as well as specifically Islamic terms. So, for example, dābtār ~ dāftār 'note-book'<sup>2</sup>, tarik 'history', mādd 'inkpot', akōl 'reason', dārāṣa 'rank, degree', aynāt 'kind, sort', wārākāt 'paper, document', kys 'lay out, measure'. It is not usually possible to date these loans exactly<sup>3</sup>, or even to ascribe them to a particular

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1. See Leslau, 'Arabic loanwords in Amharic', BSOAS, XIX, p. 221-244.

2. It would appear that the item dābtāra 'lay-priest', which derives from the same ultimate source as dābtār, etc., ie. Gk. diphthēra (see p.190), was taken directly from Greek, whilst the latter has certainly passed through an Arabic medium.

3. However, the occurrence of individual Arabic items in the language of the royal chronicles of the 15th. cent., and afterwards can provide at least an indication of the age of some loans. See especially, S.Strelcyn, 'Matériaux pour l'étude de l'ancien amharique', JSS, IX, p. 263.



dialect of Arabic<sup>1</sup>. Many of the military terms may reasonably be attributed to the long period of Arab activity along the Red Sea littoral and specifically to the Turkish occupation of Massawa. It is not so easy to put a date to many of the commercial terms, however. Occasionally it is possible to relate a given item to a particular dialect of Arabic, as in the case of gorade 'curved sword, scimitar'<sup>2</sup>, atär 'pea'<sup>3</sup> and käbäna 'coffee pot'<sup>4</sup>. In the Vocabolario only 44 items of Arabic origin are listed, with a further 51 in the Supplemento.

4. Loans from non-Semitic Ethiopian languages. In all but two or possibly three instances out of a total of 121, to which a non-Semitic Ethiopian origin can be ascribed, the particular non-Semitic source is demonstrably Cushitic and hence the label 'Cushitic' will be used below. The two or three exceptions may be either taken from, or, more likely, show the influence of, one or more of the Sudanic languages of the North West of Ethiopia - Barea and Kunama especially. The items in question are buda<sup>5</sup>, barya<sup>6</sup> and perhaps also čäräka<sup>7</sup>. None of these instances is, however, straightforward and incontestable.

The next procedure is to classify further the Cushitic items wherever possible<sup>8</sup>. The most obvious way in which

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1. See Leslau, op.cit., p. 221-2. A number of Arabic terms, like the 'learned' ones cited above, are of a bookish and hence non-dialectal origin.

2. See p.187.

3. See p.135.

4. Leslau, op.cit., p.238 cites a Datina or Yemeni source.

5. See p.189.

6. See p.184.

7. See p.157; perhaps the Sudanic terms, Kunama tera, Ingassana туру, etc., are not the prime sources, but are influenced by, or taken from, something such as Beja terig.

8. The fairly recent separation of what had hitherto been termed simply as Cushitic into Cushitic proper and Omotic (see particularly, Fleming, 'The classification of West-Cushitic within Hamito-Semitic', in Eastern African history, ed. D.F.McCall, New York 1969, p. 3-27) has been taken into account here in the use of the term 'Cushitic'. However, there does not appear to be any item in the Amharic lexicon as examined in this thesis for which a specifically Omotic origin can be established. cont.)

this can be done is when a likely cognate for the Amharic (and Semitic Ethiopian) item occurs in only one language or language group of Cushitic. Such is the case, for example, with čāw 'salt', šī 'thousand', zaf 'tree' and dāngāya ~ dāngay 'stone', which have cognates in Agaw only<sup>1</sup>; or with korma 'steer', gama 'lion's mane', yābo 'spear' and leba 'thief', which have cognates in Galla only. However, more often than not cognates for an item may be found in more than one branch of Cushitic<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, it is usually possible to relate an Amharic item to forms occurring in one particular Cushitic subgroup by means of the closeness of phonetic fit. Thus, amongst the Cushitic cognates of Amh. zənčāro 'baboon' the Agaw items (Bil. kogkūrā, Kem. kēgīrā (kāgōra), etc.) are formally closer to the Semitic Ethiopian than are Som. dankər or Hadiya dagīerā, for example<sup>3</sup>. Similarly Amh. kōra 'guinea fowl' has closer cognates amongst the Agaw languages than elsewhere in Cushitic<sup>4</sup>. In a few instances it is even possible to identify a particular Agaw language from which the Amharic item appears to have originated. Thus Amh. čamma 'sole of the foot, shoe' looks like a loan from Southern Agaw<sup>5</sup>; similarly fəyāl 'goat'<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, Amh. doro 'chicken' has a closer cognate in Saho-Afar (dōrhō) than in Agaw, where the reconstructable common form would seem to be <sup>+</sup>dirw-a

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cont.) Some items certainly do have cognates among the Omotic languages, however, at the same time exhibiting perhaps better cognates among the 'orthodox' Cushitic languages; eg. tāčč 'honey wine' (see p.147), or perhaps koso 'anthelmintic plant'.

1. See p.144, 196, 168, 157, respectively.

2. The subdivisions of Cushitic recognized here are essentially those made by Greenberg (The languages of Africa, The Hague 1966 (2nd edition)).

3. See p.173; allowing for the reconstruction of the Sem.Eth. item as <sup>+</sup>zə/ā(n)čər-o and the Agaw item as <sup>+</sup>zāčər-a.

4. See p.170.

5. See p.120.

6. See p.141.



without any trace of the h present in the Semitic Ethiopian form, as in Gz. gornac<sup>1</sup>. There still remain, however, several items which cannot be positively correlated with one particular Cushitic group in this way, though they are, of course, almost certainly Cushitic: exx. gulbāt 'knee', tāgur 'hair', wōha 'water', zāhon 'elephant'<sup>2</sup>. An additional point that should be made here is that the process of borrowing between Cushitic and Semitic Ethiopian has not, of course, been one-way. If, for example, an apparent cognate for an Amharic item is found in Agaw which is, however, phonetically unusual in terms of the the system of regular Agaw sound correspondences, then the possibility that that Agaw item is a loan from Amharic and not an inherited item must be considered. This would appear to be the case with Amh. čəḳa 'mud' and Kem. ṣəxa, where the other Agaw forms can be regularly derived from something like <sup>+</sup>d(-)rāq<sup>w</sup>-a and the expected resultant Kemant form would be not unlike that recorded for Quara, dax<sup>w</sup>a.

Of the 121 Cushitic items gleaned from the Vocabolario a reasonably certain Agaw origin can be ascribed to 41, a specifically Galla origin to 21, a Sidamo origin to six, and a general East Cushitic origin also to six. Two items may possibly be attributed to a Saho-Afar source. The remaining 45 Cushitic items cannot be correlated with one specific Cushitic group; that is, whilst almost certainly being of Cushitic origin, they show insufficient phonetic precision to enable a ready derivation from one particular language or language group. The markedly higher proportion of specifically Agaw items is not, of course, contrary to

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1. See p.141.

2. See p.121, 127, 162, 173, respectively.

what one might have expected. It is over an Agaw substratum that Amharic (and Tigrinya, too) have developed. Some of these Agaw items, like čäw, 'salt', Awk 'know', sōga 'flesh' and samba 'lung', are clearly of ancient origin in so far as they also occur in Ge'ez<sup>1</sup> and the modern Semitic Ethiopian forms can be derived from forms identical to or closely akin to those in Ge'ez. Others, like čamma 'sole of the foot', appear to be of more recent date comparatively speaking, on the one hand because they do not have cognates throughout Semitic Ethiopian, but are restricted to Amharic, and on the other hand because they cannot be derived from a common Agaw prototype but are borrowed from an already developed form.

A large number of these Cushitic items is made up of animal names (31) or plant names (10), whilst nine are from the field of natural phenomena<sup>2</sup>. Again there is nothing unusual in this, considering that many of these plants and animals are either native to the Ethiopian region and are therefore likely to have been new to the incoming Semitic speaking people or, in the case of certain domesticated species, were already familiar to the indigenous population who continued to employ the accustomed names and introduced them into Semitic Ethiopian<sup>3</sup>. Interestingly enough, some 20 terms are names of parts of the body<sup>4</sup> and 13 are names of human roles and professions, including three kinship terms<sup>5</sup>. Nearly all the Cushitic items belong to what may be described as a lower, more 'intimate' cultural sphere than, say, the Arabic loans discussed above. The obvious

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1. i.e. šew, čokä, sōga, sänbu<sup>c</sup>, respectively.

2. See p. 150 ff.

3. For a more detailed discussion see Chapter IV, sections 11 and 111, p. 128 ff. and 150 ff, respectively.

4. See p. 111 .

5. See p. 110 .



reason for this is that the indigenous, pre-Semitic peoples of Ethiopia were at a lower level of material culture than the incoming Semites. This aside, the nature of some of these Cushitic items, a significant number of which comes under the heading of 'basic' vocabulary<sup>1</sup>, suggests on a linguistic level the close degree of integration between the two population groups. While clearly remaining 'Semitic', not only on the morphological level, but also overall to a significant degree on the lexical level, Amharic has taken from Cushitic even into the nucleus of the 'basic' vocabulary with items like ənnat 'mother', wəha 'water', čäräka 'moon', kän 'day', and so on.

5. Loans from European languages. As in the case of loans from non-Ethiopian Semitic languages (Arabic, Aramaic/Hebrew), European loans in Amharic can be classified into two distinct groups, arranged chronologically. The first group consists of early loans from Greek, which may be dated to the first centuries of the Christian era, but not necessarily to the period of Christianization, as not all Greek loans are of a specifically religious nature. The direct influence of Hellenism in the Axumite period is, of course, a historical fact. The number of such Greek loans listed in the Vocabolario is small - 14. Some items of ultimately Greek origin, like säfnäg 'sponge' and almaz 'diamond', were most likely taken from Arabic and not directly from Greek. The item ayär 'air' may have entered Semitic Ethiopian through the medium of Syriac<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, fasika 'Easter' is formally closer to the Greek transcription phasék than to the original Hebrew pésah,

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1. For a discussion on 'basic' vocabulary and its applications see Hymes, 'Lexicostatistics so far', Current Anthropology, I, p. 3-44; see also p. 102ff.

2. Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 45.

Syriac pešā<sup>1</sup>. The non-religious vocabulary of Greek origin includes such items as šānkurt 'onion' (Gk. skórdon), kālām 'ink' (Gk. kálamos 'reed pen')<sup>2</sup>, ānk<sup>w</sup> 'precious stone' (Gk. ōnyks)<sup>3</sup>, bārälle 'glass' (Gk. béryllos), paḡumen 13th month (Gk. (hēmérai) epagómenai) and tārāḡpeza 'table' (Gk. trápeza). Amongst the religious or quasi-religious vocabulary we may include mōstir 'secret' (Gk. mystérion), mānākuse 'monk' (Gk. monakhós), dābtāra 'lay-priest, cantor' (Gk. diphthérai)<sup>4</sup>, diyakonos 'deacon' (Gk. diákonos), gānna 'Christmas' (Gk. génna), paḡas 'metropolitan, bishop' (Gk. páppas), wāngel 'Gospels' (Gk. euangélion), and of course kārōstos. The item bōranna 'parchment' ultimately derives from Latin membrana, but may have reached Ethiopia through the medium of Romano-Greek membrana ~ bembrana<sup>5</sup>.

The second group of items of European origin consists of modern loans chiefly from Italian, French and English. Naturally almost all such loans are of very recent date and consequently are absent from the Vocabolario itself. Quite a number, however, is listed in the Supplemento - mākina, bank, frm (firma), radyo, lastik, to mention but a few. The position of a large part of such recent loans in Amharic is somewhat fluid, French based and English based forms often existing side by side, as is the case with the well known example of parlama and parlament and the hybrid parlamant. European loans often alternate with new creations built out of native Amharic or Ge'ez morphs<sup>6</sup>

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1. Nöldeke, op.cit., p. 37; Gz. fōsh, however, appears to be derived from Hebrew.

2. ibid., p. 50.

3. See Praetorius, 'Beiträge zur äthiopischen Grammatik und Etymologie', BA, I, p. 42.

4. For a discussion on this item see p.190.

5. See Cohen, 'Etymologie d'amharique bōranna', BSL, XXIX, p.xviii.

6. See Gankin, 'Some ways and means of enriching the modern Amharic vocabulary', Actes du premier congrès international de linguistique sémitique et chamito-sémitique, ed. Caquot and Cohen, The Hague 1974, p. 352.



even in the same text, as intärnašnal and alām akkäf in text IV, below, or parlama, etc., and mökör bet, frequently observed in newspaper articles. Journalism and some recent emulations of the European novel genre have certainly exaggerated the use of such loans<sup>1</sup>, as an examination of the figures of text analyses III and IV, below, readily shows. Much of this vocabulary is confined to what may be called urban or urbanized Amharic. Only a few items like mākina, bira, polis, gazeta can be said to have permeated from urban speech sufficiently to have become more or less stable elements in the lexicon of Amharic as a whole.

6. The final heading in the list of root origins is in fact a non-statement of origin. Under 'unidentified' are included all roots for which a satisfactory etymology on both phonetic and semantic grounds cannot be established. This encompasses both roots whose form is undeniably Semitic-looking, like kbA, discussed above, and those whose structure is contrary to Semitic norms, like bōbbāt, tṭA, ššg. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the external form of a root alone is not necessarily a reliable indication of a Semitic origin or otherwise. Confirmation on the basis of semantic correlation with a satisfactory formal cognate in another language is required before any statement of origin can be safely made. Interestingly, there are several roots, like kbA, with perfectly satisfactory formal and semantic cognates throughout Semitic Ethiopian, but which appear to lack any adequate cognates outside, either in non-Ethiopian Semitic or the non-Semitic Ethiopian languages: eg. btn 'scatter', drb 'fold', lkm

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1. See Abraham Demoz, 'European loanwords in an Amharic daily paper', Language in Africa, ed. J. Spencer, Cambridge, 1963, p. 116-22; also M.L. Bender, 'Loanwords in Amharic daily newspapers', Anthropological Linguistics, XIV, p. 317-22.

'pick', bāklo 'mule'<sup>1</sup>. It could be argued that the existence of such an item throughout Semitic Ethiopian suggests a Semitic origin rather than not. It is true that the number of Cushitic items common to all or most of Semitic Ethiopian and at least datable as very early loans by their being reconstructable for the proto-historic stage, if not actually recorded in Ge'ez, is quite small:

dämmāna 'cloud', ṭāsur 'hair', čāw 'salt', samba 'lung', Awk 'know', əmbōrt 'navel', zāhon 'elephant', doro 'chicken', etc. The natural conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that the further back one recedes into the history of Semitic Ethiopian the smaller the proportion of non-Semitic elements in the lexicon. Therefore, if an item can be seen to have formed part of the common Semitic Ethiopian lexicon, it is more likely to be of Semitic origin than not. The argument must stop there, however, as only the confirmation of outside cognates can resolve the question either way. Consequently, in the statistical analysis of the lexicon unconfirmed items like kəA, drb, etc., must be classified as unidentified.

Because of the exclusion of many items on the grounds outlined above, as well as the numerous instances of failure to find even formal cognates outside the immediate congeners of Amharic, or sometimes even at all, the proportion of unidentified roots in the lexicon is high - approximately 45%. In addition, therefore, to calculating the various percentages of roots for each origin heading on the basis of the full 100% lexicon, figures have also been calculated on the 55% identified. Thus, for example, 40.09% of the total lexicon appears to be of inherited Semitic origin,

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1. Ar. baḡl is rather a loan from Gz. bākḷ and not an inherited Semitic item. See p.140.



which is, however, as much as 72.86% of the roots that can be identified. In the text analyses, on the other hand, the proportion of identified roots is markedly higher than in the lexicon analysis, ranging from 66.5% to 75.3%. Moreover, few of the high frequency roots in the texts (ie. with a frequency of at least 1/200) remain unidentified as to origin. This would seem to suggest that the figures based on the identified total, rather than the overall total, would give a more relevant picture of the Semitic proportion, etc., of the working lexicon. This does not, of course, mean to say that the figures based on the overall total should be ignored; it is a significant fact by itself that 45% of the lexicon entries cannot be readily identified.

Table I

Lexicon analysis<sup>1</sup>

	<u>H</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>
inherited Semitic	6	36	66	21	55
Ge'ez	9	1	9	1	4
Arabic	6	5	5	2	8
other Semitic	1	0	2	0	7
Cushitic	0	5	5	2	7
European	1	3	3	1	3
unidentified	9	37	91	22	60
Total	32	87	175	49	144

1. The table has been arranged according to root initial in the order of listing in the Vocabolario, except that ž and ġ, t and s have been grouped together. The symbol A serves to indicate vowel initial roots. As only four items are listed with initial p̄ (p̄arakliṭos, p̄ag w̄men, p̄apas, p̄antākoste) and one with initial p (posta), all of European origin, these two letters have been omitted from the table. All percentages, except those for the lexicon as a whole, have been reduced to one place of decimals.

	<u>H</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>
percent.inh.Sem/Tot.	18.7%	41.4%	37.7%	44.1%	38.1%
percent.inh.Sem/Idn.	26%	72%	78.3%	84%	65.5%
percent.Cush/Tot.	0	5.7%	2.8%	4.2%	4.9%
percent.Cush/Idn.	0	10%	5.9%	8%	8.1%

	<u>Š</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Č</u>
inherited Semitic	26	56	54	18	3
Ge'ez	0	0	1	0	0
Arabic	5	4	4	2	0
other Semitic	1	5	0	2	0
Cushitic	5	7	5	4	1
European	2	0	0	0	0
unidentified	61	68	55	24	6
Total	100	140	119	50	10

percent.inh.Sem/Tot.	26%	40%	45%	36%	30%
percent.inh.Sem/Idn.	66.7%	77.8%	83.1%	69.2%	75%
percent.Cush/Tot.	5%	5%	4.2%	8%	10%
percent.Cush/Idn.	12.8%	9.7%	7.7%	15.2%	25%

	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Z</u>
inherited Semitic	27	142	27	44	17
Ge'ez	0	0	2	1	2
Arabic	1	8	9	2	0
other Semitic	1	3	0	0	2
Cushitic	1	18	7	3	6
European	0	1	3	1	0
unidentified	23	92	27	22	23
Total	53	264	73	73	58



	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Z</u>
percent.inh.Sem/Tot.	50.9%	53.8%	37%	60.3%	35.4%
percent.inh.Sem/Idn.	90%	82.6%	60%	86.3%	68%
percent.Cush/Tot.	1.8%	6.8%	9.6%	4.1%	12.5%
percent.Cush/Idn.	3.3%	10.4%	15.5%	6%	24%

	<u>Z/G</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>T/S</u>
inherited Semitic	1	7	27	32	31
Ge'ez	0	0	3	0	0
Arabic	2	0	5	1	2
other Semitic	0	0	1	0	1
Cushitic	6	1	11	8	7
European	0	0	1	0	1
unidentified	8	0	44	64	36
Total	17	8	92	105	78

percent.inh.Sem/Tot.	5.9%	87.5%	29.3%	30.5%	40.3%
percent.inh.Sem/Idn.	11.1%	87.5%	56.3%	78%	77.5%
percent.Cush/Tot.	35.2%	12.5%	11.9%	7.6%	9.1%
percent.Cush/Idn.	66.7%	12.5%	22.9%	19.5%	17.5%

	<u>C</u>	<u>F</u>
inherited Semitic	6	23
Ge'ez	0	0
Arabic	0	3
other Semitic	0	0
Cushitic	11	1
European	0	2
unidentified	17	31
Total	34	60

	Č	F
percent.inh.Sem/Tot.	17.6%	38.3%
percent.inh.Sem/Idn.	35.2%	79.3%
percent.Cush/Tot.	32.3%	1.7%
percent.Cush/Idn.	64.7%	3.3%

Total number of roots	1809	
Total identified	995	(55.03%)
Inherited Semitic roots	725	(40.09% of total) (72.86% of identified total)
<b>Cushitic roots</b>	121	( 6.69% of total) (12.16% of identified total)

#### Observations on Table I

H. Most instances of root initial h are of Ge'ez origin (həbəst, hayl, həywät, həsan, etc.) or Arabic origin (hakim, hisab, etc.). As already indicated, the only cases of h- in inherited Semitic items in Amharic derive from an earlier k-. The six roots with this development k > hh are, hullu 'all', hač<sup>1</sup> 'below', hOn 'become', hulät(t) ~ haya 'two; twenty', hEd 'go' and hod 'stomach'. No example of roots in h- of Cushitic origin occurs in the Vocabolario.

Z/Č and Č. These are the only initial position phonemes exhibiting a higher proportion of Cushitic items than Semitic ones. Only one root in initial Č can be readily attributed to an inherited Semitic source: Čəb 'hyena'<sup>2</sup>. Another, čmr 'begin', may be Semitic if it is to be connected with Gz. gmr ('agmärä) 'complete'<sup>3</sup>.

1. From <sup>+</sup>kač besides tač < <sup>+</sup>tahti.

2. See p.170.

3. See Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, p. 71.



Such polarizations of meaning are indeed not unknown in Semitic Ethiopian, or in Semitic in general for that matter<sup>1</sup>; one need only recall Gz. hamat and Amh. amat/amač<sup>2</sup>, or the older Ge'ez usage of dābub as 'north' beside the later and Amharic usage as 'south'<sup>3</sup>. However, as the only Semitic Ethiopian cognate of Amh. ṣmr in this sense of 'begin' is Tna. ṣmr and no further conspectus of the root can be found in Semitic Ethiopian to support or refute this etymology either way, the item is better listed as unidentified<sup>4</sup>. As indicated in the previous chapter, all instances of ṣ in inherited Semitic items in Amharic derive from an original d, z, or occasionally g. Similarly, half of the Cushitic items in ṣ- can be shown to have originated in forms with g- or z-: ṣārba 'back', ṣōra 'guinea fowl', ṣoro 'ear'<sup>5</sup>. The others appear to have been borrowed already with initial ṣ-: ṣan 'Emperor', ṣerat 'tail', ṣoraf 'whip'<sup>6</sup>.

Similarly, whilst all the examples of initial č- in inherited Semitic roots originate in forms in ṭ- or ṣ/z-, some of the cases of č- in items of Cushitic origin can be shown to have developed within Semitic Ethiopian from original ṭ- or ṣ/z-. So, for example, čāw 'salt' (Gz. ṣew), čəs 'smoke' (Gz. ṭis), čārāka 'moon' (Gaf. ṣārāka, Ch. ṭānaka), and perhaps also čoh 'shout' (from <sup>+</sup>ṣwh or Agaw <sup>+</sup>ṣəg<sup>w</sup>-). Others most probably entered Amharic already with č-: čoma 'fat', čamma 'shoe', čəlat 'hawk', čəra 'fly whisk'<sup>7</sup>.

1. See Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 67-101.

2. See p. 114.

3. Nöldeke, op.cit., p. 82.

4. The Tna. root ṣmr is, as Ullendorff has said, not necessarily a loanword, but the combination of the phoneme ṣ and the accompanying B-type pattern (as in Amharic) favour a loan from Amharic rather than an inherited item in Tigrinya here.

5. See p. 123, 170, 123, respectively.

6. See p. 181, 170, resp.; for ṣoraf compare Tembaro ṣirāfā.

7. See p. 144, 120, 169, 170, respectively.

The roots of demonstrable Semitic origin in č- are člm 'be dark' (Sem. zlm), čmk 'squeeze' (Heb. šmq), čärk 'rag' (Ar. šaraq 'thin'), čbt 'grasp' (Sem. dbt), čAn 'load' (Sem. z<sup>C</sup>n), čwt 'converse' (Sem. šwt), čnk 'oppress' (Sem. ḏnk ~ ḏnq). The root čOh 'shout', mentioned above, may be derived ultimately from Sem. šw<sup>C</sup> ~ šwh (Gz. sāw<sup>Ca</sup>, Heb. šāh). The radical k > h, however, in the Amh. čOh and Tna. čOk clearly indicates that any derivation from šwh cannot be direct. One is led, however, to wonder whether contamination might have taken place with an Agaw root reconstructable as <sup>+</sup>šōq<sup>W</sup>- or as <sup>+</sup>šōk<sup>W</sup>- (Khm. šawq, Kem. šōw ~ šiw, etc.). Alternatively, the Amharic and Tigrinya forms may be simply pseudocorrections from šwh to <sup>+</sup>šwk.

Y. The total number of roots with initial y is very small. In the Semitic items, moreover, this y- is in each case in some way of secondary nature. That is to say, it does not derive from common Semitic y<sup>1</sup>, but from some other sound. Thus, in the demonstratives ya and yōh and the genitive/relative particle yä-, the y derives from an original z. In the root yAz 'take, hold', the y has entered the verbal root from the 3rd person prefix yō-, the original form of the root being, of course, 'hz, as in Ge'ez. In the interrogative yet 'where', the y has most probably arisen as a glide before the vowel e: <sup>+</sup>'ayt > <sup>+</sup>et > yet. This would appear to conform with the principle that the only vowels occurring in word initial position in Amharic are a and ə<sup>2</sup>. In the irregular verb root ylā (yällām) 'not to be', the initial y derives from

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1. Indeed, comparatively speaking, there are not many roots in y- that can be reconstructed for Proto-Semitic: yā, ywm, yam, ynq, ybs, ydc are the most notable.

2. Except in a few rare cases like the interjection ärä and loans like eli 'Tortoise' and, of course, ityōpya.



the reduction of the original negative preformative 'i: 'i+(h)allä- > yällä-.

The single Cushitic item in y- is yäbo 'spear', which is a loan from Galla.

Č. A few words along similar lines to the above can also be said about č. In the four instances of identifiable roots, three Semitic and one Cushitic, the č is of secondary origin, deriving from an earlier k or t. The Semitic items are čAl 'be able' (Gz. kh1), čär 'kind' (cf. Tna. ker ~ kär, pseudocorrection from Gz. her) and čokal 'peg' (Sem.Eth. tk1). The Cushitic item, čar 'be difficult', derives from an Agaw root tar (Bil. tegirä) with variants tkr and dkr (Kem. däkär-), meaning 'hunger'.

P, Ṗ. As mentioned in the note to Table I, all five occurrences of p and Ṗ in initial position are in European, especially Greek, loanwords. A few other items in p- observed in the texts but not listed in the Vocabolario are also of European origin. The existence and suggestions as to the origins of these sounds as phonemes in Semitic Ethiopian have indeed been the subject of various comments and studies<sup>1</sup> and need not, therefore, be gone into here.

Particularly low frequencies of Cushitic roots (ie. less than 6% of the identified total) occur in H : 0; N : 3.3%, one item, nug<sup>2</sup>; W : 6%, three items, wōha 'water', wōšša 'dog', wäyra 'olive tree'<sup>3</sup>; F : 3.3%, one item, fōyäl 'goat'<sup>4</sup>. High frequencies of Cushitic roots (ie. more than 18% of the identified total) occur in Z : 24%, six items, zāhon 'elephant', zar, zōngäro 'baboon', zaf 'tree',

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1. See especially Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, p. 89-90, 96, 103, 105, 107, 108.

2. See p.138.

3. See p.162, 142, 166, respectively.

4. See p.141.

zega 'subject' and zəmm in zəmm alä 'be silent'<sup>1</sup>;  
D : 22.9%, eleven times, dəmmät 'cat', dämmäna 'cloud',  
doro 'chicken', däss in däss alä 'be happy', dnk<sup>w</sup>r 'be deaf',  
dängöya 'stone', däga 'highlands', duda 'mute', doha 'poor',  
dabbo 'bread', dönk 'dwarf'<sup>2</sup>; G : 19.5%, eight items,  
gubät 'knee', gamma 'lion's mane', gəra 'left', gašša  
 'shield', gunč 'cheek', gošo 'hut', gäs 'face', goš  
 'buffalo'<sup>3</sup>. Also with a high proportion of Cushitic items  
 are roots in Z/Ġ and Ĉ, which have been discussed above.  
 The high figure of 25% for Cushitic roots in Ĉ- is, of  
 course, a result of the distortion afforded by the low  
 number of roots with this initial, nevertheless, as a  
 proportion, it remains valid.

The initials with a low proportion of inherited Semitic  
 roots (ie. less than 45% of the identified total) are  
H : 26%, six items; Z/Ġ : 11.1%, one item; Ĉ : 35.2%,  
 six items. The details of these figures have been  
 discussed above. It is, I think, clear that the low  
 Semitic figures for the palatals Z/Ġ and Ĉ are to some  
 degree explicable by the secondary nature of these sounds  
 in Semitic Ethiopian. In so far as the palatalization  
 rules are restricted in phonetic environment<sup>4</sup>, the number  
 of roots eligible for the changes d,z > Ġ and s,t > Ĉ in  
 initial position would necessarily be comparatively small.  
 The sounds Z/Ġ and Ĉ do not themselves militate against  
 Semitic origin; rather the restricted environment of the  
 sound change involved is the controlling factor here in  
 producing the low figures for Semitic origin. At the other

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1. See p.173, 191, 173, 166, 184, resp., and for zəmm compare  
 Bil. sam y-, Kem. səm y-, Quara zem y-.

2. dəmmät, see p.141; dämmäna, see p.157; doro, see p.141;  
dnk<sup>w</sup>r, see p.121; dängöya, see p.157; däga, see p.157;  
duda, Galla id.; doha, see p.185.

3. gubät, see p.121; gəra, see p.122; gašša, see p.137;  
gunč, see p.122; goš, see p.169.

4. See p. 35.



end of the scale, the high figures for Cushitic items in these initials are not to be explained by reference to the presence of ž/ʒ and č alone, for, as has already been noted, the palatals are not original in several roots of Cushitic origin, but have developed under the same rule as the corresponding sounds in roots of inherited Semitic origin. In the case of initial h-, all occurrences in initial position in items of inherited Semitic origin are derived from an original k by the fricativization rule. The figure for such Semitic items here is low, moreover, because of the 'weakness' of the sound change rule and the high proportion of Ge'ez loans here.

The areas of the lexicon with a high proportion of inherited Semitic roots (ie. more than 80% of the identified total) are R : 84%; B : 83.1%; N : 90%; A : 82.6%; Y : 87.5%. Other than to note again the distortion of the figures for Y, because of the low number of total roots involved, no special explanation would seem to be necessary for these figures. None of these percentages is outstandingly high when compared with the figure of 72.86% for the whole lexicon, nor can any phonetic or phonological reason be identified why these particular initials have a higher average proportion of Semitic roots, except to note that A, ie. vocalic initial, derives from all the laryngal phonemes of common Semitic Ethiopian, ' h ʕ h and h, a greater conflation of originally separate phonemes into one phoneme in Amharic than elsewhere.

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The second part of this chapter is devoted to statistics of the type already discussed, but arising from the analysis of selected texts and not the dictionary. In the lexicon analysis two roots such as hOn 'become' and člm 'be dark' are both unequivocally classified as inherited Semitic and no further statement of the two roots need be made. However, in text analysis I, for example, the same two roots occur but hOn has a frequency of 42/2177, whilst člm has only 1/2177. The same sort of example can be given for Cushitic roots, Arabic roots, and so on. It is, of course, obvious that certain lexical items will occur in any given text more frequently than others, regardless of the subject matter. A noun, for example, referring to a specific, non-general item like koso, sānsälät, or afönča will be likely to occur less frequently than a general noun like sāw, or bet. Moreover, certain lexemes, both verbs and nouns, which fulfil a specialized syntactic role, in addition to their primary lexical reference, will occur very frequently. Verb roots such as hOn 'become', Al ~ bAl 'say', the copula nä-, nominals like and 'one', ors- 3rd person pronoun, gize 'time' and particles like əndä 'as' are typical examples of this kind of high frequency root, as a glance at the tables below will show. Roots from this category are usually found amongst the high frequency items (1/200 at least) whatever the subject matter of the text in which they occur. Such items are, moreover, typically included amongst what can be characterized as the 'basic' vocabulary of the language, either in a lexicostatistical sense or, simply, in a pedagogical context. It is one of the first tenets of lexicostatistics and, indeed, the foundation of glottochronology that the 'basic', as opposed to the 'non-

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basic', element of the vocabulary shows a greater degree of conservatism and resistance to innovation than the rest of the lexicon<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, it would appear that there is in general a direct correlation between the frequency of a word and its 'age', ie. rate of conservation in the lexicon<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, in the analysis of the texts that follow one could rightly expect a greater proportion of inherited Semitic items amongst the high frequency roots than the low frequency ones. Examination of the tables below does indeed show that high frequency items, like hOn, Al ~ bAl, and, sāw, etc., are typically of inherited Semitic origin and that a greater degree of conservation of inherited elements is evident here than amongst lower frequency items. Thus, for example, of the 37 roots listed in text analysis I occurring at a frequency of approximately 1/200 and over, 31 are of inherited Semitic origin. This is a far greater proportion than for the whole text where 227 out of 379 roots are inherited Semitic - ie. 59.8%. In this way the proportion of inherited Semitic material in a given text will typically be higher than in the straightforward dictionary count.

The following text analyses were carried out in the same way as the lexicon analysis, both as regards the identification of roots and their classification into groups according to origin. However, consistently bound morphs such as the prepositional elements bā-, lā-, yā- etc., the verb AlĀ (allā) in compounds and affixed pronouns have not been counted in the text analyses. Proper names were

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1. See Hymes, Current Anthropology, I, p. 4.

2. See Zipf, 'Cultural chronological strata in speech', Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, XLI, p. 355-361.

also excluded from the count, but not titles like ras, aläka, ase, etc. In analyses I and II Ge'ez quotes were omitted, too. The texts were chosen to include the principal expected poles of style, date, and subject matter. Each text is approximately 2000 words in length and forms a completed whole in itself, ie. one chapter or article. The first text is taken from Mäshafä Təzzəta<sup>1</sup> and was chosen as an example of vernacular Amharic in so far as the text consists of the autobiographical reminiscences of Aläka Lämna dictated to the author, his son. The second text is taken from the Chronique de Théodoros II<sup>2</sup> and represents an example of older, nineteenth century literary language. The third text is taken from Ar'aya<sup>3</sup> as an example of more recent literature. The fourth and final text is an article from the monthly magazine Mänän and was selected as a representative piece of modern journalistic Amharic. The topics of these texts vary from autobiographical narrative in the first instance, through historical exposition in the second, and descriptive narrative in the third, to political discussion and argument in the fourth. The styles vary from the occasionally disjointed and repetitive Mäshafä Təzzəta to the carefully structured Ar'aya, from a mixture of prose and verse (including Ge'ez) in the Chronique de Théodoros II to a style often heavily imitative of European journalese in the Mänän article.

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1. Mäshafä təzzəta zä'aläka Lämna, Mängöstu Lämna, Addis Ababa, 1959 EC.

2. Chronique de Théodoros II roi des rois d'Ethiopie (1853-1868), d'après un manuscrit original, ed. Mondon-Vidailhet, Paris 1904.

3. Ar'aya, Gärmaččäw Täklä Hawaryat, Addis Ababa, 1947 EC.



Table II

Text analysis I<sup>1</sup>

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>Al</u> ~ <u>bAl</u> 'say'	144	inherited Semitic
<u>nä-</u> 'be' (copula)	122	" "
<u>ya</u> 'that'	72	" "
<u>yōh</u> 'this'	51	" "
<u>AlĀ</u> 'be'	44	" "
<u>hOn</u> 'be, become'	42	" "
<u>wld</u> 'bear, beget'	40	" "
<u>hEd</u> 'go'	37	" "
<u>yAz</u> 'take, hold'	32	" "
<u>mtA</u> 'come'	30	" "
<u>bet</u> 'house'	28	" "
<u>ōne</u> 'I'	24	" "
<u>AyĀ</u> 'see'	23	" "
<u>sāw/set</u> 'man, woman'	23	" "
<u>gize</u> 'time'	22	" "
<u>wtA</u> 'come out'	22	" "
<u>abbat</u> 'father'	20	" "
<u>and</u> 'one'	20	" "
<u>ōnnat</u> 'mother'	19	Cushitic
<u>tāĀĀ</u> 'honey wine'	19	"
<u>ōrs-</u> ~ <u>ōss-</u> 3rd pers. pron.	18	inherited Semitic
<u>lay</u> 'upon'	18	" "
<u>drg</u> 'do'	16	" "
<u>nsA</u> 'take up'	16	" "
<u>tṭA</u> 'drink'	16	unidentified
<u>mōn</u> 'what'	15	inherited Semitic
<u>agār</u> 'country'	14	" "

1. Māshafā Tōzzōta zā'alāka Lāmma, Māngōstu Lāmma, Addis Ababa 1959 EC., Chapter 2, Lōġġōnnāt, p. 35-57, 2177 words.

In this and the following tables only individual items with a frequency of approx. 1/200, ie. occurring ten times and more, have been listed. The statistics only of lower frequency roots have been recorded.

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>hullu</u> 'all'	14	inherited Semitic
<u>h<sup>w</sup>ala</u> 'after'	14	" "
<u>nbr</u> 'have been'	14	" "
<u>gñā</u> 'find'	13	" "
<u>hulät(t)</u> , etc. 'two'	13	" "
<u>wrd</u> 'descend'	12	" "
<u>Ard</u> 'slaughter'	12	" "
<u>Awk</u> 'know'	11	Cushitic
<u>əgäle</u> 'so-and-so'	10	inherited Semitic
<u>əngi</u> contrastive particle	10	unidentified

Frequency: 9 : 7 roots:- 6 inh.Sem., 1 unidn.  
8 : 5 roots:- 4 inh.Sem., 1 unidn.  
7 : 11 roots:- 9 inh.Sem., 2 unidn.  
6 : 16 roots:- 12 inh.Sem., 1 Cush., 3 unidn.  
5 : 21 roots:- 15 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 1 Eu.,  
4 unidn.  
4 : 32 roots:- 20 inh.Sem., 3 Ar., 1 other Sem.,  
2 Cush., 6 unidn.  
3 : 43 roots:- 25 inh.Sem., 3 Ar., 4 Cush.,  
11 unidn.  
2 : 65 roots:- 35 inh.Sem., 6 Cush., 24 unidn.  
1 : 144 roots:- 69 inh.Sem., 2 Ar., 4 other Sem.,  
11 Cush., 58 unidn.

Total number of roots	379
Total identified	270 (71.2%)
Inherited Semitic	227 (59.8% of total) (84.07% of identified total)
Cushitic	26 ( 6.86% of total) ( 9.63% of identified total)

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Table III

Text analysis II<sup>1</sup>

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>	
<u>yoh</u> 'this'	105	inherited Semitic	
<u>Al</u> ~ <u>bAl</u> 'say'	103	"	"
<u>saw/set</u> 'man, woman'	31	"	"
<u>ngr</u> 'speak'	30	"	"
<u>ondä</u> 'as'	30	"	"
<u>nä-</u> 'is' (copula)	29	"	"
<u>ngs</u> 'be king'	28	"	"
<u>yAz</u> 'take, hold'	28	"	"
<u>hOn</u> 'be, become'	27	"	"
<u>wld</u> 'bear, beget'	26	"	"
<u>gbA</u> 'enter'	26	"	"
<u>gize</u> 'time'	26	"	"
<u>h<sup>w</sup>ala</u> 'after'	25	"	"
<u>mtA</u> 'come'	24	"	"
<u>hullu</u> 'all'	24	"	"
<u>nbr</u> 'have been'	23	"	"
<u>mls</u> 'return'	20	"	"
<u>stA</u> 'give'	20	"	"
<u>wädä</u> 'towards'	20	"	"
<u>AlA</u> 'be'	16	"	"
<u>wgA</u> 'stab'	15	"	"
<u>and</u> 'one'	15	"	"
<u>ya</u> 'that'	15	"	"
<u>Amr</u> 'begin'	14	unidentified	
<u>drg</u> 'do'	14	inherited Semitic	
<u>abbat</u> 'father'	14	"	"

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1. Chronique de Théodoros II roi des rois d'Ethiopie (1853-1868), d'après un manuscrit original, ed. Mondon-Vidailhet, Paris 1904, p. 1-15 incl., 1816 words.

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>däʾ</u> 'door'	14	inherited Semitic
<u>wrd</u> 'descend'	13	" "
<u>əzɪabəher</u> 'God'	13	" "
<u>zmt</u> 'raid'	13	unidentified
<u>nsA</u> 'take up'	13	inherited Semitic
<u>sfr</u> 'camp'	12	" "
<u>gən</u> 'but'	12	Cushitic
<u>hEd</u> 'go'	12	inherited Semitic
<u>srA</u> 'work, do'	12	" "
<u>AyĀ</u> 'see'	12	" "
<u>papas</u> 'metropolitan, bishop'	11	European
<u>kān</u> 'day'	11	Cushitic
<u>mOt</u> 'die'	11	inherited Semitic
<u>lay</u> 'upon'	11	" "
<u>hulät(t), etc.</u> 'two'	11	" "
<u>drs</u> 'reach'	10	" "
<u>dəl</u> 'victory'	10	" "
<u>smA</u> 'hear'	10	" "
<u>bet</u> 'house'	10	" "
<u>Adg</u> 'grow'	10	unidentified
<u>wtA</u> 'come out'	10	inherited Semitic

<u>Frequency:</u>	9	:	5 roots:-	5 inh.Sem.
	8	:	6 roots:-	5 inh.Sem., 1 unidn.
	7	:	6 roots:-	4 inh.Sem., 2 unidn,
	6	:	13 roots:-	11 inh.Sem., 1 other Sem., 1 unidn.
	5	:	19 roots:-	8 inh.Sem., 2 Ar., 1 other Sem., 1 Eu., 3 Cush., 4 unidn.
	4	:	21 roots:-	15 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 2 other Sem., 2 Cush., 1 unidn.

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- 3 : 27 roots:- 19 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 1 other Sem.,  
6 unidn.
- 2 : 64 roots:- 35 inh.Sem., 1 Gz., 1 other Sem.,  
1 Eu., 8 Cush., 18 unidn.
- 1 : 122 roots:- 68 inh.Sem., 2 Ar., 2 other Sem.,  
6 Cush., 44 unidn.

Total number of roots	330
Total identified	248 (75.3%)
Inherited Semitic	210 (63.7% of total) (84.8% of identified total)
Cushitic	21 ( 6.3% of total) ( 8.9% of identified total)

Table IV

Text analysis III<sup>1</sup>

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>	
<u>Al</u> ~ <u>bAl</u> 'say'	59	inherited Semitic	
<u>hOn</u> 'be, become'	59	"	"
<u>yoh</u> 'this'	45	"	"
<u>and</u> 'one'	44	"	"
<u>nä-</u> 'be' (copula)	42	"	"
<u>säw/set</u> 'man, woman'	37	"	"
<u>nbr</u> 'have been'	36	"	"
<u>Alä</u> 'be'	32	"	"
<u>Ayä</u> 'see'	31	"	"
<u>bzA</u> 'be many'	30	"	"
<u>nOr</u> 'dwell'	27	"	"
<u>öndä</u> 'as'	25	"	"
<u>ngr</u> 'speak'	25	"	"

1. Ar'aya, Gormaččäw Täklä Hawaryat, Addis Ababa, 1947 EC., Chapter 10, Addis Abäba, p.104-12, 2169 words.

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>Alf</u> 'pass'	22	inherited Semitic
<u>bet</u> 'house'	22	" "
<u>ntA</u> 'come'	20	" "
<u>sölä</u> 'because'	19	" "
<u>krÄ</u> 'remain'	19	" "
<u>ftr</u> 'create'	18	" "
<u>kätäma</u> 'city'	18	unidentified
<u>msl</u> 'seem'	18	inherited Semitic
<u>lAk</u> 'be more'	18	" "
<u>wädä</u> 'towards'	18	" "
<u>lay</u> 'upon'	17	" "
<u>wAl</u> 'pass the day'	17	" "
<u>agär</u> 'country'	16	" "
<u>drs</u> 'reach'	15	" "
<u>fit</u> 'face'	15	" "
<u>gÄÄ</u> 'find'	15	" "
<u>hözöb</u> 'people'	15	Ge'ez
<u>käff</u> 'high'	15	unidentified
<u>örs-</u> 3rd pers. pron.	15	inherited Semitic
<u>wtA</u> 'come out'	15	" "
<u>lyÄ</u> 'separate'	14	" "
<u>Akl</u> 'equal'	13	unidentified
<u>gön</u> 'but'	13	Cushitic
<u>gize</u> 'time'	13	inherited Semitic
<u>Abr</u> 'join'	12	" "
<u>hEd</u> 'go'	12	" "
<u>Asb</u> 'think'	11	" "
<u>zOr</u> 'turn'	11	" "
<u>sfA</u> 'be wide'	10	" "

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<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>Awk</u> 'know'	10	Cushitic
<u>stA</u> 'give'	10	inherited Semitic
<u>mlkt</u> 'notice'	10	unidentified
<u>geta</u> 'lord'	10	inherited Semitic
<u>rdA</u> 'help'	10	" "
<u>bal</u> 'master'	10	" "
<u>həgg</u> 'law'	10	Ge'ez
<u>tkm</u> 'profit'	10	unidentified
<u>blA</u> 'eat'	10	inherited Semitic
<u>wld</u> 'bear, beget'	10	" "
<u>kbr</u> 'honour'	10	" "
<u>əddəl</u> 'fortune'	10	unidentified

<u>Frequency:</u>	9	:	12 roots:-	11 inh.Sem., 1 unidn.
	8	:	9 roots:-	6 inh.Sem., 3 unidn.
	7	:	15 roots:-	8 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 4 Cush., 2 unidn.
	6	:	17 roots:-	13 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 1 Cush., 2 unidn.
	5	:	21 roots:-	15 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 1 Cush., 4 unidn.
	4	:	39 roots:-	18 inh.Sem., 2 Ar., 1 other Sem., 3 Eu., 3 Cush., 12 unidn.
	3	:	53 roots:-	27 inh.Sem., 1 other Sem., 4 Eu., 2 Cush., 19 unidn.
	2	:	66 roots:-	33 inh.Sem., 5 Ar., 1 Eu., 2 Cush., 25 unidn.
	1	:	162 roots:-	63 inh.Sem., 7 Ar., 2 Eu., 10 Cush., 80 unidn.

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Total number of roots	445
Total identified	296 (66.5%)
Inherited Semitic	242 (54.4% of total) (89.19% of identified total)
Cushitic	25 ( 5.1% of total) ( 8.44% of identified total)

Table V

Text analysis IV<sup>1</sup>

<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>hOn</u> 'be, become'	73	inherited Semitic
<u>wsn</u> 'delimit'	51	" "
<u>smA</u> 'hear'	48	" "
<u>yōh</u> 'this'	45	" "
<u>dr̥g</u> 'do'	36	" "
<u>gzA</u> 'rule'	31	" "
<u>gbA</u> 'enter'	24	" "
<u>AlĀ</u> 'be'	23	" "
<u>kl̥l</u> 'set up boundaries'	23	" "
<u>msrt</u> 'found'	23	" "
<u>nā-</u> 'be' (copula)	22	" "
<u>ngs</u> 'be king, govern'	22	" "
<u>Al</u> ~ <u>bAl</u> 'say'	21	" "
<u>intärnašnal</u> 'international'	20	European
<u>dōmbār</u> 'frontier'	20	inherited Semitic
<u>lyĀ</u> 'separate'	20	" "
<u>Adr</u> 'pass the night'	19	" "
<u>and</u> 'one'	19	" "

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1. Mänän, Tär 1966 EC., 'Kägoräbetaččön käsomaliya gar yallän gəndəñunnät', p. 10-19, 1516 words.



<u>Root</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>gize</u> 'time'	18	inherited Semitic
<u>nbr</u> 'have been'	17	" "
<u>gñÄ</u> 'find'	16	" "
<u>lay</u> 'upon'	16	" "
<u>nar</u> 'speak'	16	" "
<u>gar</u> 'with'	15	Cushitic
<u>Abr</u> 'join'	13	inherited Semitic
<u>Awk</u> 'know'	13	Cushitic
<u>gls</u> 'explain'	13	unidentified
<u>wAl</u> 'pass the day'	13	inherited Semitic
<u>guday</u> 'affair'	12	unidentified
<u>kbl</u> 'receive'	12	inherited Semitic
<u>mrA</u> 'lead'	12	" "
<u>stÄ</u> 'give'	12	" "
<u>Akl</u> 'equal'	12	unidentified
<u>ðndä</u> 'as'	11	inherited Semitic
<u>agär</u> 'country'	11	" "
<u>srA</u> 'work'	11	" "
<u>kOm</u> 'stand'	11	" "
<u>mlkt</u> 'notice'	10	unidentified
<u>hayl</u> 'power'	10	Ge'ez
<u>mogzit</u> 'protector'	10	"
<u>drä</u> 'organize'	10	Arabic
<u>hulät(t), etc.</u> 'two'	10	inherited Semitic
<u>sltn</u> 'be in authority'	10	other Semitic
<u>tkš</u> 'cite'	10	inherited Semitic

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<u>Frequency:</u>	9	:	5 roots:-	5 inh.Sem.,
	8	:	12 roots:-	6 inh.Sem., 1 Gz., 1 Ar., 1 Cush., 3 unidn.
	7	:	5 roots:-	4 inh.Sem., 1 unidn.
	6	:	13 roots:-	9 inh.Sem., 1 Cush., 3 unidn.
	5	:	8 roots:-	8 inh.Sem.
	4	:	16 roots:-	8 inh.Sem., 1 Gz., 1 Eu., 1 Cush., 4 unidn.
	3	:	28 roots:-	16 inh.Sem., 1 Ar., 2 Cush., 9 unidn.
	2	:	48 roots:-	28 inh.Sem., 2 Ar., 2 other Sem., 2 Eu., 2 Cush., 12 unidn.
	1	:	104 roots:-	51 inh.Sem., 1 Gz., 2 Ar., 1 other Sem., 5 Eu., 44 unidn.

Total number of roots	280
Total identified	197 (70.35%)
Inherited Semitic	170 (60.7% of total) (86.29% of identified total)
Cushitic	9 ( 3.2% of total) ( 5.3% of identified total)

Observations on the text analyses.      The first observation that can be made on the overall text analysis statistics is that the figure for inherited Semitic roots is considerably higher than the figure obtained from the lexicon analysis:

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average 86.1% of identified total as against 72.86%. In contrast, the figure for roots of Cushitic origin is noticeably smaller: 8.1% of identified total as against 12.16%. Moreover, the respective inherited Semitic and Cushitic figures in the text analyses are quite remarkably stable, regardless of the variations of date and subject matter of the material; they diverge from their mean no more than a little over 2%: inherited Semitic, 84.07, 84.8, 89.19, 86.29; Cushitic: 9.63, 8.9, 8.44, 5.3. This suggests that the balance in composition of the lexicon has remained fairly stable in spite of the seemingly uncontrolled influx of European loans, for example.

Only a very small number of Cushitic items occurs with a frequency of over 1/200 and all these are at the lower end of the high frequency scale: Awk, əḡn, kān and gar are the only items found here with any degree of consistency. The majority of Cushitic items in the texts occurs four times and less, ie. at most at a frequency of 1/500. On the other hand, all the very high frequency roots (ie. occurring a total of at least 80 times - approx. 1/100) are of inherited Semitic origin: Al ~ bAl, nā-, yāh, Alā, hOn, and, nbr, ya, sāw/set, ng, all of which may be broadly characterized as having a specialized syntactic function in addition to lexical reference<sup>1</sup>.

When we turn to the other constituent elements of the lexicon, non-Ethiopian loans of various origins, only the obvious emerges from the text analyses. Simply, European loans are almost non-existent in the oldest text (Chronique de Théodoros II) and the 'vernacular' text (Māṣḥafā Təzzōta), increase in the more recent text (Ar'aya), and are the most

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1. See above, p. 74.

prevalent in the journalistic text (Mänän). Moreover, the relevant items in the first two texts are ecclesiastical and of Greek origin: körəstiyān, pāpas. Arabic loans, on the other hand, do not show such a marked divergence from text to text in chronological sequence: Théodoros has six, Māṣḥafā Təzzəta eight, Ar'aya sixteen and Mänän six. The higher instance of Arabic loans in Ar'aya is mostly made up of items occurring only once or twice, like sahōn, dəst, ṭāmānza, tarik, alama, gorade, arāke, mädəf, etc. The most frequently occurring roots of Arabic origin in the texts are drā, tarik, slm (əslām), aškār, aynāt, sā'at and gorade.

The results of these analyses would, therefore, only seem to confirm the suspicion that an examination of any Amharic text will reveal, namely that the bulk of the basic, recurrent Amharic vocabulary is Semitic.

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## CHAPTER III : MORPHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The aim of this short chapter is to examine the morphological status of loan items, of whatever origin, in the Amharic lexicon and to discover whether such items are more prevalent in one morphological category than in another. The first step in an investigation of this kind is to establish what the primary morphological category of a root actually is. Of course, in the majority of cases this presents no problem at all. A simple root, like ənnat, wəšša, čäräka, or lole, which is not a derivative in paradigmatic relationship to any other primary item, can be nothing other than a noun. However, the identification of the fundamental category of a root with a wider morphological spectrum, with both verbal and nominal extensions for example, may not be so simple. It is a basic feature of Semitic languages (and of Amharic no less than of other, more 'orthodox' Semitic languages) that, with the exception of a number of primary, specifically nominal roots, the root in its consonantal skeleton form<sup>1</sup> is morphologically neutral; morphological category is imparted by means of internal vowel patterning and affixes. Thus, the Semitic Ethiopian root ngs is neither verbal nor nominal as it stands; the category and function of the verb is indicated by the patterning n-ä-gg-ä-s-ä, for example, whilst the nominal category and function is provided by the patterning n-ə-g-u-s, another by mä-n-g-ə-s-t, and so on.

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1. For the purposes of this investigation it is not necessary or, indeed, relevant to consider the status of vowels as inherent elements in the Proto-Semitic root alongside the traditional, purely consonantal conception thereof.

The rendering of ngs by 'be king', as, for example, has been done in the previous chapter, is basically no more than conventional shorthand, though not without some justification. It is a feature of Semitic languages to be 'verbocentric', that is to have as the simplest realization of a root a verbal form<sup>1</sup>. Thus, to take the example of ngs, the simplest expression of this root is nāggāsā 'be king', or of wal it is walā 'spend the day', of wtā wātta 'come out', besides respective nominal forms like nōgus 'king', ōlāt 'day', or wōčč 'outside'. It is, of course, this simple verbal pattern which is traditionally chosen to represent the root as, for example, the main entry in the dictionary, even when such a simple verb form is not extant. The same development is also applied in the formation of what may be called denominative verbs, whereby a verb is formed out of a primary nominal root; thus, bārrāyā ~ bārāyyā constructed on a repatterned bry (or bryā)<sup>2</sup> created out of the noun bäre 'ox', or gābāyyā from gābāya 'market', or mānāššā from mānš 'winnowing pan'. Indeed, the process is still very much active in Amharic, so much so as to be able to extrapolate suitable consonantal skeletons from recent European loanwords and form regular verbal patterns from them: fārrāmā from firma 'signature', kommākā from komik 'clown', māzzākā from muzika 'music', and so on<sup>3</sup>. These are obvious examples, readily analysed in terms of the category of the underlying loan item, but they may serve to illustrate the point when we turn to

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1. This notion of 'verbocentricity' is based here chiefly on practical observations in the dictionary.

2. The radical y has been extrapolated out of the palatal vowel e of the noun; as y rarely occurs in Amharic verbs as a final radical, but more usually in -ā verbs (with lost final radical y), the curtailed quadriliteral bryā has also arisen; so, roo, gbyā and mnšā.

3. See R. Cowley, 'A and B verbal stem-type in Amharic', JES, VII, 1, p. 1-14; see especially the list of verbs on p. 6.



evaluating Cushitic roots like čgr, tk<sup>w</sup>s or Awk as fundamentally nominal or verbal. Within the terms of a descriptive analysis of Amharic this is a somewhat otiose and unnecessary question. However, as the concern of this investigation is to examine the relative proportions of nominal and verbal roots amongst the loan items in the Amharic lexicon, we must be able to identify the primary morphological category of such items before integration into the regular Amharic morphological system took place. The category of cognate items in the source language(s) can be instructive here<sup>1</sup>. Thus, Awk 'know' is relatable to purely verbal forms: Kem. ax-, S.Agaw aq-, Som. oq-; čgr 'be difficult' and tk<sup>w</sup>s 'be warm', on the other hand, and probably better connected with nominal forms: Kem. dōkōr 'hunger', etc., and Kem. tōxōza 'smoke', respectively.

The problem is to some extent further alleviated from the Amharic side by clues from the morphology of the items themselves. Thus, verbs following the type B pattern in Amharic can often be shown to be derived from a noun, in other words are denominative verbs<sup>2</sup>. This can be demonstrated either by close semantic association with the noun (as abbābē and abāba 'flower', or šāmmānā and šāmmāne 'weaver'), or (what is more readily identifiable), because the verb has carried over some specifically nominal element or feature of a nominal pattern from the base noun. Thus, mānāššā from mānš 'winnowing pan' (Gz./š<sup>c</sup>y),

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1. In the case of many items, cognate forms can only be drawn from the modern representatives of the original source language(s) - this is, of course, the case with Cushitic items from an older level of borrowing.

2. The function of the verb stem with medial radical gemination in Semitic as a whole is complex and varied. In addition to intensive, plurative and causative functions, this stem occurs throughout Semitic in a denominative sense, as here in Amharic. See Ryder, The D-stem in Western Semitic, The Hague, 1974, p. 50-3.

awwäää from awaä 'proclamation' (Gz./<sup>c</sup>wd), tärrätä from törrit 'invitation' (Amh./trA, Gz. try), zäbbänä from zäbännä 'guard' (Amh./zäb). The same denominal derivation might lie behind čäggärä 'be difficult' if it is formed on a noun <sup>+</sup>tögör (Kem. dökör, Bil. tögöra, S.Agaw tökri) > čög(g)ör<sup>1</sup>. This denominal function of the type B pattern can, therefore, be a valuable aid in identifying the primary morphological category of such loan roots<sup>2</sup>. Of course, this argument is only required in those instances where a verb cannot be readily recognized as a usual Amharic denominative, as sänägga from sänga 'castrated animal', šämägällä from šomagelle 'old man', dämmänä from dämmäna 'cloud', dänäkk<sup>w</sup>ärä from dänkoro 'deaf', and so on.

Only the categories of noun and verb will be dealt with in this chapter. Particles, ie. uninflected items, and pronouns and numerals will be discussed as a special category in the following chapter, Section 5<sup>3</sup>.

When we turn to the figures deduced from the list of loan roots gathered from the Vocabolario, as in the previous chapter, the main overall observation that can be made is that nouns outnumber primary verbs in the proportion of 11.2 : 1 (ie. 88.4% nouns, 8.7% verbs, 2.9% other parts of speech). The very large proportion of nouns to verbs is not particularly surprising. It is a general tendency of lexical borrowing between languages that nouns are more readily accepted than verbs. This can be explained on the one hand by reference to the semantics involved, namely that a concrete object or defined abstract and its name is on

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1. The vowel e of the S.Ethiopian type B pattern <sup>+</sup>ket(t)älä could also explain the č- here: <sup>+</sup>teggärä > čäggärä.

2. Significantly both čgr and tk<sup>w</sup>s are type B, whilst Awk is type A.

3. See p. 192 ff.



the whole more easily borrowed than that of an action, and, on the other hand, by the question of compatibility. It is certainly the case with the various languages relevant to this study of Amharic that noun morphology is considerably simpler than that of verbs and, therefore, it would be easier to accommodate a loan noun to the indigenous morphological system than a loan verb. This question of morphological compatibility is, I think, particularly relevant in discussing Cushitic items in Amharic and will be enlarged upon below<sup>1</sup>. A noun like doro 'chicken' from Cushitic, or gazeta 'newspaper' from Italian, or mārkāb 'ship' from Arabic, after adaptation to Amharic phonetics, remains inflexionally stable in Amharic morphology and the few paradigmatic changes that the noun may undergo are confined to external prefixes or suffixes, like yä-, -oč(č), -u, etc.<sup>2</sup> In the adoption of a verb, however, such as awwākā 'know' from Cushitic, or käyyäsä 'measure out' from Arabic, the degree of morphological adaptation required is far greater. Not only must a triradical root be established (Awk and kys, respectively), but this root must conform to an extensive paradigm involving not only prefixes and suffixes, but also internal vowel patterning, consonant gemination and syllable reduplication<sup>3</sup>.

The largest incidence of loan verbs occurs amongst Arabic items in the Amharic lexicon. Out of the 74 Arabic roots occurring in the Vocabolario and Supplemento, 17 are primary verbs (approx. 23%). Amongst these are included bäyyädä

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1. See p. 95 ff.

2. Of course, this is not a universal feature of noun morphology, even within Semitic. In Arabic loan nouns receive new broken plural patterns, cf. Egyptian Arabic film : 'aflām 'film(s)', duktur : dakatra 'doctor(s)'.<sup>3</sup>

3. Of course, Amharic verb morphology is very similar to that of Arabic and other Semitic languages and Arabic items like qys (>kys), ḥgm (>Agm), trz, srf (>šrf), fyd, etc., are already formally suitable to fit into the Amharic pattern. This is not so much the case with Cushitic verb roots, as will be explained below.

'weld', tärräzä 'bind a book', käyyäsä 'measure out', abäššärä 'have confidence', šärräfä 'change money', kässäbä 'win, earn', azzämä 'practise witchcraft', and so on.

The original Arabic forms are all immediately identifiable with native Amharic verb root patterns and need only be adapted to Amharic phonetics<sup>1</sup>.

Another morphological feature relevant to Arabic loans in Amharic concerns the treatment of the Arabic feminine ending (tā marbūṭa) on loan nouns. Out of 47 nouns with this ending, as listed by Leslau<sup>2</sup>, as many as 39 render it by -a, in accordance with the prepausal pronunciation in Arabic. Only in eight items is it rendered by -ät and two of these, foṭät 'napkin' and käfiyät 'scale', also have variants in -a: foṭa, käfiya. The other six are aybät 'skin bag', rawat ~ räwat 'water-skin', aynät 'kind, sort', wäräkät 'paper', kaflät 'caravan', and wäket 'ounce'<sup>3</sup>. The presence of -ät, reflecting as it does more the orthography than the current, prepausal pronunciation of Arabic, in wäräkät and aynät might be explained if these two items are seen as 'learned' or bookish loans, but this explanation cannot be so easily applied to the other items in -ät.

Amongst roots borrowed from other non-Ethiopian Semitic languages only four primary verb roots can be identified<sup>4</sup>. However, as the overall numbers involved are markedly lower than is the case with Arabic loans, the relative

1. The Arabic source forms here are bayada, ṭarraza, qayyasa, 'abšara, šarrafa, kasaba and 'azama, respectively.

2. See Leslau, 'Arabic loanwords in Amharic', BSOAS, XIX, p. 221-244.

3. It is not, I think, certain that this last item is a loan from Arabic; certainly it occurs already in Ge'ez and would seem to be formally rather removed from Ar. 'awqiya.

4. This excludes instances like kds, mlk and Gz. ḥt, where an apparently indigenous root has been influenced in its semantics by a related Semitic form.



proportion of verb roots to noun roots here is still significantly higher than amongst Cushitic or European loans: four out of a total of 26 - 15.4%. The four roots in question are ṣOm 'fast', ṣly 'pray', sgd 'prostrate o.s.', and zmr 'sing psalms'. All three are, of course, inherited through Ge'ez and belong to the sphere of religious or quasi-religious vocabulary. As is the case with the Arabic items, the root structure of the original source forms is immediately compatible with Ge'ez and Amharic patterns.

The picture presented by Cushitic items is, however, completely different. Out of a total of 121 roots of Cushitic origin only one can be considered indubitably as a primary verb, bearing in mind the arguments put forward above<sup>1</sup>, namely Awk 'know'. A number of roots with a principally verbal expression in Amharic, like ḡgr and tk<sup>w</sup>s, is almost certainly of secondary, denominative origin. Significantly, perhaps, Awk also occurs in Ge'ez (Cwk) as well as in other modern Semitic Ethiopian languages. The cognate forms of this root are fairly widespread in Cushitic and are all biradical: Kem. ax-, S.Agaw aq-, Som. oq-<sup>2</sup>, whilst the Semitic Ethiopian root has clearly been remodelled on the Semitic triradical pattern. This brings us to the question of root compatibility between Cushitic and Semitic Ethiopian. The predominant verb root pattern in Agaw, which of all the Cushitic language groups has almost certainly been the strongest and most persistent substratum in Amharic, is

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1. See p. 51ff.

2. The Bilin verb 'är'- and Khamir arg- 'know' are, therefore, probably not to be connected with the Kemant and S.Agaw forms as suggested by Conti Rossini, La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, p. 162.

monosyllabic, i.e. of the structure (C)VC(C)-. Except for a few, highly interesting remnants of a more Semitic-like pattern of internal vowel alternation (ablaut) as a feature of verb inflexion<sup>1</sup>, the verb stem in Agaw is invariable and contains a characteristic vowel, which is quite unlike the Semitic pattern. For example, out of the 234 primary verb roots of inherited Agaw origin listed in the appendix of Hetzron's treatment of the S.Agaw verb<sup>2</sup>, 171 are monosyllabic ((C)VC(C)-) and 63 are polysyllabic ((C)VC(C)VC(C)-). A similar predominance of monosyllabic over polysyllabic verb roots can be observed in other Agaw languages. In Kemant language material collected by myself there occur 78 primary verb roots of inherited Agaw origin with a monosyllabic pattern as against 35 with a polysyllabic pattern. Moreover, the majority of these monosyllabic roots is biconsonantal (CVC-) and, as such, not readily compatible with the Semitic triradical and triconsonantal pattern (C-C-C-). This formal incompatibility could help to explain the markedly low incidence of primary verb roots of Cushitic origin in the Amharic lexicon as against the higher figures for Arabic and other Semitic loans, where root structures are readily compatible with the Amharic patterns.

There is, however, one special type of verb pattern, ultimately of Cushitic (and probably specifically Agaw) origin, which requires separate comment. The verbs in

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1. See D.Cohen, 'Alternances vocaliques dans le système verbale couchitique et chamito-sémitique', in Actes du premier congrès international de linguistique sémitique et chamito-sémitique, The Hague 1974, p. 40-8.

2. Hetzron, The verbal system of Southern Agaw, Los Angeles 1969.



question are the compound descriptives with alä 'say', which occur throughout modern Semitic Ethiopian and in the Agaw languages. It also seems likely that the present Cushitic suffix conjugation derives from a similar compounding of an invariable element with the inflecting verb 'to say'<sup>1</sup>, though the compounds as such do not appear to occur outside Agaw. The pattern has become productive in Amharic, forming compounds from inherited Semitic roots, as səbbərr alä from sbr 'break', or bəlləčč alä from blš (Gz. täbaläšä 'shine')<sup>2</sup>. However, many of the initial elements of these compound descriptive verbs cannot be related to an existing verb root:

däss alä 'be happy', zəmm alä 'be quiet', käss alä 'be careful', käff alä 'be high', bəkk alä 'appear suddenly'.

They do, however, have direct formal cognates in Agaw:

Kem. däs y-, Khm. dis y-, S.Agaw däss y-; Kem. səm y-, Bil. sam y-; Kem. bək y-, Khm. bäk y-; etc.

Undoubtedly, many of these are straightforward loans from Agaw into Amharic. Others, however, are clearly Amharic extensions of the pattern, some of which have been taken into Agaw, as Kem. atäš y- 'sneeze', Khm. etiš y- (Amh. əntəs/əntəš alä, Gz. čts). Indeed, the pattern is still productive in Agaw and is often used as a means of adapting an Amharic loan to the Agaw verbal system, as Kem. bək<sup>w</sup> alä y- 'sprout', aräd y- 'slaughter', säkär y- 'get drunk', läma y- 'be prosperous', tam y- 'taste good', šäbäb y- 'be narrow'. The decidedly onomatopoeic nature of many compounds occurring both in Amharic and Agaw, such

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1. See Praetorius, Zur Grammatik der Galla-Sprache, Berlin 1893, p. 159-60; also Hetzron, op.cit., p. 72.

2. See M.Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 286 ff.

as bu alä 'bark', aff alä 'blow', tušš alä 'hiss', makes it impossible and, indeed, rather futile to try and pinpoint one language or language group as the source of the item. Such items are best described as common Ethiopian rather than Cushitic, Semitic, or whatever. The same could even be said of items like bəkk alä 'pop up, appear suddenly', futt alä 'sip', where the sound of the invariable element could be thought of as describing or imitating the action. Here, however, we begin to enter the field of opinion rather than objective analysis. Whatever the details of individual forms might be here, the morphological pattern of these compounds, and no small number of actual forms, are probably of Agaw origin. What is more, if the invariable element and the inflecting verb 'say' are treated together as one verb in this analysis, then they represent almost the sum total of Cushitic loan verbs in Amharic<sup>1</sup>. The figures still remain comparatively low, however, when viewed alongside those for loan verbs of Arabic origin, for example. This is not, of course, because the alä compounds are few in number themselves, but because the actual examples with widely distributed and formally satisfactory cognates in Agaw are not very numerous. Forms such as däss alä, zəmm alä, etc., cited above, can be admitted as of Agaw origin, but others like käss alä and futt alä are, I think, best left as unidentified according to the principles established in the previous chapter<sup>2</sup>. Whilst the pattern is almost certainly of Agaw origin, it is not always possible to prove adequately enough that individual forms are.

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1. Though, of course, the inflecting verbal part of the compound in Amharic, as in the other Semitic Ethiopian languages, is of Semitic origin.

2. See p. 63 ff.



Amongst European loans in Amharic only nominal roots appear and such verbal forms as occur are clearly denominal, being of the type B pattern<sup>1</sup>: dännäsä 'dance' (English or French dance), färrämä 'sign' (Italian firma), kommäkä 'clown' (English comic or French comique), and so on.

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1. See Cowley, op.cit., p. 2, "denominative stems and neologisms appear all to be type B".

## CHAPTER IV : SEMANTIC FIELDS

In this chapter I propose to examine in detail a number of specific semantic fields. In each section a separate semantic field will be discussed first as a whole, from the point of view of the respective statistics of inherited Semitic and loan items and any extra-linguistic inferences that may be drawn therefrom, and secondly with regard to individual items representing each field, which will be examined in some detail.

The notion of semantic field, like much of semantics, lacks the precision of definition of the levels of functional linguistics. A semantic field may be broadly defined as a conceptual sphere. The individual lexical items which can be grouped under a given semantic field will, however, differ from language to language. To this extent a semantic field is not as readily or as clearly definable as the functional units of language. Nevertheless, the concept is a useful and valid one in a study of this kind. Certain areas of the lexicon are bound to be more vulnerable to borrowing and innovation, as they reflect the cultural sensitivity of their referents, than others. It is precisely for this reason that the division of the lexicon into semantic fields and the comparison of the retention rate statistics of each field have such value in a study of this kind. A comparative analysis of phonology and morphology may reveal the genetic position of the language and its position vis-à-vis its cognate languages, but a comparative lexical study can

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provide not only finer details of linguistic connexions and contacts, but also indications of extra-linguistic factors.

The semantic fields for this study were chosen in order to provide a reasonably wide spectrum of culturally 'specific' and 'non-specific' vocabulary. Four fairly wide fields were selected: (i) 'man', (ii) 'the domestic environment', (iii) 'the natural environment', (iv) 'social organization', and one more 'field' closely involved with morphology, encompassing pronouns, numerals and particles ((v) 'grammatical items'). This last 'field' has been included to provide a lexical link with morphological analyses such as Hetzron's<sup>1</sup>. Each of these broad fields is then further subdivided into more specific sections; for example, the semantic field 'man' has three subdivisions, (a) general, (b) kinship terms, and (c) parts of the body. These four broad semantic fields range from what could be expected to be a conservative area of the lexicon ('man') to the areas of social organization and domestic environment, more sensitive to borrowing and innovation. The field of natural environment has been included because it is in part delimited and defined by the particular geographical context in which the language is spoken. The latter is a particularly important consideration when one bears in mind the presumed Asiatic origin of Semitic speech in Ethiopia. The more 'conservative' fields may be assumed to give an indication of the maximal retention of inherited Semitic lexical stock, whilst the more innovatory fields will be especially valuable in providing clues to cultural influences and

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1. Hetzron, Ethiopian Semitic, Manchester 1972.

pressures exerted from outside the language community. Thus, the inherited Semitic and loanword composition of these areas of the lexicon can be an important guide to extra-linguistic developments in the Amharic language area. For example, it comes as no surprise that much of the specific flora and fauna vocabulary of Amharic is of non-Semitic, Cushitic origin<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the influence of Arabic is strongly felt in the fields of commerce and warfare<sup>2</sup>.

An important theoretical concept throughout this discussion is the notion of 'basic' vocabulary. The concept of vocabulary as polarized into two groups, 'cultural' and 'non-cultural', or 'basic' and 'non-basic', is by no means a new idea<sup>3</sup>. At one end of the scale are items whose referents are considered to be nearly universal and most resistant to innovation and replacement. At the other end are those whose referents are specific to the cultural environment and which are, therefore, susceptible to innovation and replacement in accordance with developments in the society in which the language is spoken. The recognition of different levels of the lexicon subject to different rates of change led to the composition of 'basic' word-lists, representing the most conservative and stable area of vocabulary. These are typically used in glottochronology as test samples from which a means of dating language development has been derived. Whatever the merits or otherwise of this application of the concept of 'basic' vocabulary, the recognition of these two broadly identifiable poles of the lexicon cannot, I believe, be seriously objected to. There is not, of

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1. See p. 163 ff.

2. See p. 174 ff.

3. See Hymes, 'Lexicostatistics so far', Current Anthropology, I, p. 4-5.



course, a sharp dichotomy between the two; they are merely indications of trend and not absolutes. The individual lexical constituents of 'basic' vocabulary necessarily differ from one language area to another. Thus, it need hardly be said that whilst an item 'sea' might be assigned to the 'basic' vocabulary of coastal dwellers, it would be ridiculous to insist on such an item amongst the 'basic' vocabulary of desert dwellers. Rather than define individual items like 'sea', 'horse', 'father', or whatever, as 'basic' vocabulary, it would seem more advisable to deal only with semantic fields at this level. These are less specific than individual items and more applicable to the notion of universality, upon which the concept of 'basic' vocabulary is partly built, and it is this contention that lies behind the choice of semantic fields used in this discussion. Thus, one might reasonably expect to include kinship terms, parts of the body, certain natural phenomena, etc., though not necessarily individual items from these fields, amongst universal 'basic' vocabulary. Specific plant or animal names, kinship terms dependent on the particular social organization of the language community, and so on are, on the other hand, 'non-basic'. Throughout the discussions that follow I shall use this concept of 'basic' vocabulary in dealing with inherited Semitic and loanword proportions from semantic field to semantic field.

The distribution of specific lexical items, whether of inherited Semitic origin or not, can provide valuable insight into the classification and, more especially, the

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interaction of various Semitic Ethiopian languages amongst themselves. Whilst lexical isoglosses might not necessarily be indicative of genetic groupings, they may often provide tangible clues to former geographical contiguity. Lexical criteria are, of course, not the first means that should be used in classification work, precisely because of the vulnerability of the lexicon to change and outside influence as described in the preceeding paragraphs. Nevertheless, a few important lexical isoglosses exist which seem broadly to coincide with those established on morphological evidence<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps the most interesting of these concern a probable North - South Ethiopian dichotomy. Most prominent amongst these are those instances where S.Ethiopian as a whole preserves a Semitic root absent from N.Ethiopian: exx. <sup>+</sup>wz<sup>C</sup> (Amh. wāzza) 'sweat', <sup>+</sup>cfr (Amh. afär) 'dust', <sup>+</sup>hbb (Amh. əbab) 'snake', <sup>+</sup>tl<sup>C</sup> (Amh. təl) 'worm', <sup>+</sup>nty (Amh. māče) 'when', <sup>+</sup>f-t (Amh. fit) 'face'. There are also instances where S.Ethiopian as a whole shares a different root patterning or development from N.Ethiopian: exx. hamat as masculine 'father-in-law' with a re-formation <sup>+</sup>hamati as its feminine counterpart (N.Eth. ham(u), hamat); <sup>+</sup>mōs 'husband' and <sup>+</sup>mōsit 'wife' as against N.Eth. bə'si and bə'sit; <sup>+</sup>k<sup>W</sup>əlali- 'kidney' as against N.Eth. k<sup>W</sup>əlit (Gz.Tna), kəl'kəl'ot (Te.); <sup>+</sup>kəl'e + ya 'twenty', formed on the common root kl' 'two', as against N.Eth. ḥəśra, ḥəsra; <sup>+</sup>cam + na 'last year' from the common Semitic Ethiopian root cam 'year'; S.Eth. <sup>+</sup>dəbr 'forest' but N.Eth. däbr 'mountain'; S.Eth. <sup>+</sup>kāni<sup>C</sup> 'right' from the Semitic Ethiopian root kn<sup>C</sup> 'be straight', but N.Eth. yāman (Gz.Tna), man (Te.);

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1. ie. those drawn up by Hetzron, op.cit.



S.Eth. <sup>+</sup>fšy 'grind' but N.Eth. fšh; also probably to be included here is S.Eth. gäbs 'barley' but N.Eth. sägām, sögām, if indeed the S.Ethiopian form does represent a peculiar metathesis<sup>1</sup>. In addition to these Semitic roots and patterns common to S.Ethiopian only, there is a small number of non-Semitic loan items which occur throughout S.Ethiopian but not in N.Ethiopian:

<sup>+</sup>zə/äht + äñ (Amh. zätäñ) 'nine', <sup>+</sup>s/ṭärä/aka (Amh. ṣäräka)<sup>2</sup> 'moon', ḥ<sup>w</sup>älbät 'knee',<sup>3</sup> kur-a, etc., 'crow', <sup>+</sup>arnäbät (Amh. andäbät) 'tongue', <sup>+</sup>s/ṭogg- 'calf'. In each of these cases, with the probable exception of 'crow',<sup>4</sup> N.Ethiopian preserves the inherited Semitic root. Of course, none of these in itself is necessarily proof of a genetic division between North and South Ethiopian, but they are interesting and, indeed, relevant in the light of the morphological isoglosses distinguishing the three northern languages from the rest of Semitic Ethiopian. The geographical contiguity, at the present or in former times, of the languages concerned could explain many of these examples, particularly the common S.Ethiopian non-Semitic items. For example, the original source of andäbät, etc., is almost certainly to be sought amongst the East Cushitic languages, the likely earlier distribution of which was probably restricted to the Rift Valley area of south and south-east Ethiopia, and so in an appropriate location for the centre of diffusion of such a loan throughout S.Ethiopian.

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1. See below, p.137.

2. The inherited Semitic item is maintained throughout S.Ethiopian in the restricted sense of 'month' (Amh. wär).

3. This item does in fact occur in Tigrinya, but with the sense of 'strength', which is also covered by many of the S.Ethiopian terms, and, as such, is probably an amharicism.

4. Gz. k<sup>w</sup>a<sup>c</sup>, Tna. k<sup>w</sup>ax, Ye. kōwa<sup>c</sup> have an onomatopoeic feel about them and have close formal cognates in some of the Agaw languages.

Within S.Ethiopian there are several lexical isoglosses connecting Amharic with other members of what Hetzron has called "Transversal South Ethiopic"<sup>1</sup>, ie. Amharic, Argobba, Harari and East Gurage. Often Gafat, and sometimes other Gurage languages, especially Soddo, are included in these isoglosses. Gafat, etc., does not belong to the same supposed subgroup of S.Ethiopian as Amharic, but has for a long period been contiguous with Amharic and under its influence. Examples of these locally restricted items, including non-Semitic loans, are akəst 'aunt' (Amh.Arg.Har.Gaf.), čən 'thigh' (Amh.Arg.Har.Gaf. Wl. Ch.), ge 'country, place, town' (Amh.Arg.Har.Sl.Wl.Z.Gaf.Sod.), riz 'beard' (Amh.Arg.Gaf.Z.), wəšša 'dog' (Amh.Arg.Gaf.Sod.), zaf 'tree' (Amh.Arg.Har.Gaf.), əffuñit 'viper' (Amh.Har.Sl.Wl.Z.).

Finally, it should be mentioned that Amharic, occasionally together with other contiguous S.Ethiopian languages, often shares a lexical isogloss with Tigrinya, thereby cutting across alleged genetic boundaries. This is particularly prevalent in the semantic field of social organization, a likely explanation for which is not hard to find. The speakers of Amharic and Tigrinya are the direct inheritors of the Ge'ez, Axumite cultural tradition and consequently have long shared in their cultural development. This is to some extent reflected in specifically 'cultural' vocabulary. Furthermore, ever since the expansion of the Amhara and the subsequent reduction of the belt of Agaw across the central highlands, Amharic and Tigrinya have been geographically contiguous. Aside from terms inherited from Ge'ez, Amharic and Tigrinya share

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1. Hetzron, op.cit., p. 36.



the following social terms: aläka : haläxa 'head, superior', dañña 'judge', geta : g<sup>w</sup>äyta 'lord', goräbet : g<sup>w</sup>äräbet 'neighbour', kätäma 'town', šäffätä 'revolt', doha : döxa 'poor', wättaddär : wättöhaddär 'soldier', däbtära in the sense of 'lay priest'<sup>1</sup>. Some of these might simply be loans from Amharic into Tigrinya, as, for example, the form of dañña suggests. Others could equally well be common developments. Examples from other semantic fields where Amharic and Tigrinya share a common form, loan or development of an inherited root, are: set : säbäyti 'woman', önnat : 'önno 'mother', dänkoro : dänk<sup>w</sup>äro 'deaf', göra : göraw 'left (handed)', mālas : mälhas 'tongue', kämbär 'yoke', wätäto : wätoto 'kid, he-goat', the pattern önkulal : 'önkulalih 'egg' beside 'önkokho, etc.<sup>2</sup>, bokka : bäx<sup>w</sup>ce 'ferment' beside Gz. böh'a, çohä : çoxä 'shout' perhaps for <sup>+</sup>šwh, ašäwa : hašäwa 'sand', dängöya : däng<sup>w</sup>älla 'stone, rock', gön : gö'on ~ gön 'but'. Some of these occur throughout S.Ethiopian or in some other S.Ethiopian languages besides Amharic, but are all found only in Tigrinya from among N.Ethiopian. Again, some are probably loans from Amharic into Tigrinya, or vice-versa, rather than common developments.

The receptiveness of the lexicon to change and outside influence, more perhaps than any other level of linguistic analysis, means that this kind of lexical isogloss cannot be employed alone in language classification. The importance of these isoglosses lies in outlining geographical and/or cultural language areas, as demonstrated, for example, by the Tigrinya-Amharic or Amharic-Gurage isoglosses.

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1. Gz. däbtära means 'tabernacle' and is thus closer to the sense of the original Gk. diphthērai.

2. Tna. also has 'önk<sup>w</sup>ak<sup>w</sup>öho.

Only in the case of those Semitic root isoglosses distinguishing S.Ethiopian from N.Ethiopian does it appear that lexical evidence can be directly correlated with morphologically established groups. The few examples relevant to the case of "Transversal South Ethiopic" are obscured by contacts with other S.Ethiopian languages like Gafat and Soddo. Lexical evidence for subgroups not involving Amharic has not, of course, been studied here.

Each of the five semantic field sections will begin with a discussion on the overall field arising from the details of individual lexical items that follow. This discussion will take the form of statistics of inherited as against borrowed items, any structural patterns that can be identified, any extra-linguistic observations that can be made, and so on. This will be followed in each section by a more detailed etymological discussion of the individual lexical items involved. Only in a closed set like kinship terms, numerals or perhaps parts of the body, can the list of items be anything like complete. Elsewhere the list of items is intended to be no more than representative of the semantic field. For this purpose, therefore, only the most 'obvious' items were chosen. Those items with some particularly relevant or interesting contribution to the history of Amharic are discussed in full with detailed etymological analysis. Other more straightforward items need only be labelled as inherited Semitic, Cushitic, or whatever.

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# I The semantic field 'man'

The three subdivisions grouped under this heading are a) general terms, b) kinship terms, and c) parts of the body. In the case of kinship terms, we are dealing with a relatively small set of items<sup>1</sup> which is closely structured and in which all members are interrelated in a system, so that the loss or replacement of one item in that system may affect the whole. For example, the Amharic terms aggot 'uncle' and akōst 'aunt', both of non-Semitic origin, do not replace single lexemes, but phrases in common Semitic Ethiopian, as Gz. 'əhwā 'əmm 'mother's brother', 'əhtā 'ab 'father's sister', etc. It is, incidentally, interesting to note here that a similar restructuring also occurs amongst the numerals, where Amh. ši 'thousand', probably of Agaw origin, replaces the phrase 'ten hundred', as Gz. cašārtu mō't<sup>2</sup>.

An interesting morphological feature of kinship terms in Amharic, as a system, is the suffix -at, common to several items in this field<sup>3</sup>. This suffix is most likely related to the external plural formative -at, occurring in Ge'ez, Tigrinya and Tigre, and in Amharic as -ačč- in certain plural pronouns. Possible support for this view that -at in certain kinship terms is identical with the plural formative occurs in other S.Ethiopian items like Sl.Wl. abot 'father', Ch. adot 'mother', Har. indoč 'woman', Sl.Wl. əndač 'woman', all of which contain a suffix clearly connected with the plural formative <sup>+</sup>-ot(i) ~ -at(i), though used on singular nouns. Of course, these suffixes

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1. 13 kinship terms are discussed here.

2. Semitic 'lp has acquired the meaning 'ten thousand' in Semitic Ethiopian, cf. Gz. 'əlf.

3. abbat, ənnat, ayat; in amat ~ amač and mōrat, however, the suffix əat is of a different origin, being originally a feminine formative.

have lost their plural connotation in these items and the ordinary plural formative is added as on any other noun: Amh. abbatoč(č), ənnatoč(č), ayatoč(č), etc. It can only be conjectured why an (originally) plural formative became attached to these items, but the most likely explanation would seem to be that the plural is being employed as a kind of honorific, as is still the case in the 'polite' forms in Amharic. Furthermore, the simple items 'ab' and 'əmm' acquired specifically theological connotations, becoming pre-empted by that sphere, and, therefore, formally differentiated items might have been felt necessary in the simple kinship sense.

Of the 17 items discussed under the heading 'kinship', all but three are of Semitic origin: abbat 'father', amat ~ amač 'in-law'<sup>1</sup>, ət 'sister', bal 'husband', lōg 'child', wällädä 'bear, beget', all have direct cognates throughout Semitic; aččä 'betroth', agäbba 'marry', mərat 'sister/daughter-in-law', mist 'wife', wändəm(m) 'brother', warsa 'brother-in-law' and possibly zämäd 'relative' are all peculiarly Ethiopian developments of otherwise common Semitic roots. The three items of probable Cushitic origin are aggot 'uncle', akəst 'aunt', and ənnat 'mother'. A possible explanation for the take-over of the first two of these has been made above. In connexion with ənnat it is interesting to note that Amharic is not the only Semitic Ethiopian language that has a non-Semitic term for 'mother'<sup>2</sup>.

In the field of parts of the body there is a somewhat higher percentage of non-Semitic items - 26.6%, 16 items

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1. The semantic range of these items is fairly wide; for a full list see below, p. 114.

2. For a detailed discussion on this and all other items in the preliminary sections to each semantic field see the individual analyses that follow.



out of a total of 60 studied here. Amongst the Semitic items are preserved most of the common Semitic terms<sup>1</sup>: af 'mouth', afənča 'nose', atənt 'bone', ayn 'eye', əǧ 'hand', dām 'blood', fit 'face', gurāro 'throat', hod 'belly', kulalit 'kidney', ləbb 'heart', mālas 'tongue' (/lḥs 'lick'), ras 'head', šəbāt 'grey hair', šil 'foetus', šənt 'urine', təfər 'nail', tat 'finger', wāzza 'sweat', and so on.

Of those items of non-Semitic origin ənbərt 'navel' and təgur 'hair' are particularly widespread throughout Semitic Ethiopian, both N.Ethiopian and S.Ethiopian<sup>2</sup>. Common to S.Ethiopian only are andəbāt 'tongue', čamma 'sole of the foot'<sup>3</sup>, gulbāt 'knee'<sup>4</sup>, gunč 'cheek', riz 'beard'. The only item of Cushitic origin, besides ənbərt and təgur, which has a cognate in Ge'ez as well as in modern N.Ethiopian and S.Ethiopian is samba 'lung'. Two items in Amharic of Cushitic origin which have no apparent cognates in the rest of Semitic Ethiopian are koro 'ear' and kiṭ 'anus'<sup>5</sup>.

I do not think that any specific conclusion can be drawn from the relatively high percentage of non-Semitic items in the field of parts of the body, other than as an indication of the long and intimate symbiosis between Amharic (and Semitic Ethiopian) and Cushitic. If the concept and implications of 'basic' vocabulary are accepted, then the inclusion of so many loans in this particular

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1. For these see Fronzaroli, 'Studi sul lessico comune semitico', II, l'uomo e l'età', RANL, VIII.XIX, p. 18ff and p. 262ff.

2. Both of these items have at times been connected with forms occurring in other Semitic languages. For details see below.

3. Also meaning 'shoe' - probably a secondary development.

4. Tna. gulbāt is probably due to Amharic influence; the Tna. term for 'knee', bərki, is inherited Semitic.

5. Perhaps Gz. k<sup>w</sup>iys 'shin' is related; see below, p. 124.

field must at least suggest that. The non-Semitic origin of these items is for the most part attributable to specific Cushitic languages or language groups - Agaw, Sidamo, or Galla, for example.

a) general terms

- aroge 'old man' : Gz. 'arägawi ~ 'arägay, Tna. 'arägiti<sup>1</sup>, Har. rāga, Old Amh. aräge<sup>2</sup>. Several Semitic Ethiopian languages, including Amharic, also have a corresponding verb: Gz.Tna. 'arägä, Amh.Arg. aräḥḥä, Sl.Wl. räḥe. The S.Ethiopian verbal forms are probably denominatives, which would explain the palatalization g > ḡ from the y of the noun suffix taken as final radical. The underlying form of the root is 'rg, as appears in the N.Ethiopian verb forms. Brockelmann<sup>3</sup> connects this 'rg with Sem. 'rk 'be long', but this is doubtful<sup>4</sup>. Cerulli<sup>5</sup>, on the other hand, prefers a derivation from Cushitic, cf. Som. rāg 'remain!', rāga 'grow old', Saho-Afar rā<sup>c</sup> 'endure'. It is not, of course, impossible that we are dealing with a root ultimately common to both Semitic and Cushitic and that one may have influenced the other in the formal and semantic development of Sem.Eth. 'rg.
- ənnəst 'female' : Gz. 'anəst, Tna. 'anəstäyti, Te. 'əssit, Arg. ənəšča, Har. ənəsti, etc. Common Semitic 'nt.
- motä 'die' : Gz.Tna. motä, etc. Common Semitic mw.
- set 'woman' : Tna. säbäyti. A feminine derivative from säb 'man' (see following item). Amharic

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1. Feminine in form but both masculine and feminine in meaning.  
 2. Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 44; Ludolf (Lexicon, p. 57) also has aräge with palatalization.  
 3. Brockelmann, Lexicon syriacum, Halle 1928, p. 49.  
 4. See D.Cohen, Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques, Fasc.1, La Haye, 1970, p. 33.  
 5. Cerulli, Studi etiopici I, Roma 1936, p. 268.



and Tigrinya appear to be the only Semitic Ethiopian languages which employ a feminine form of sāb for 'woman'. Most of the other languages use a derivative of the root 'ns-t (see ənnōst, above), or b's-t (see mist, below).

sāw 'man' : Gz. sāb', Tna. sāb'ay (pl. sāb),  
Te. sāb 'people', Arg. su, Har. usu',  
Gaf. sāwwā, etc. An interesting speculation is whether Eth. sāb' might be connected with the South Arabian ethnic name sb' and common noun sb' 'warrior'.

wānd 'male' : Gz. wāld 'son', Tna. wāddi, Te. wād,  
Arg. wānd, Har. wāldi. This is, of course, from the common Semitic root wld 'beget'.

#### b) kinship terms

abbat 'father' : Gz.Te. 'ab, Tna. 'ab ~ 'abbo, Arg. aw,  
Har. āw, Gaf. ab<sup>w</sup>ā, etc. Common Semitic 'b. A similar root also occurs amongst the Cushitic languages: Bil. abbā, Kem. aba, Galla abba, etc., and is most probably a common Hamito-Semitic root.

aččā 'betroth' : Gz. ḥazāyā 'share, give a bride gift',  
Tna. ḥasāyā, Te. ḥassa, Gaf. ačā 'marry'.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. ḥassa 'fall as a share',  
Heb. ḥasā 'share, divide'.

agäbba 'marry' : Gaf. atgibbā, Ch. agäp<sup>h</sup>am. Literally 'bring in'; the root gb' 'enter' occurs throughout Semitic Ethiopian and in  
Ar. ʿaba'a, ESA. gb'.

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aggot 'uncle' : Tna. 'akko, Har. kāka. This item is of Cushitic origin; for Amh., cf. Bil. ag, Khm.S.Agaw ig; for the other Semitic Ethiopian forms a slightly better formal cognate occurs in Galla akko ~ akkakayu 'grandmother', Sid. akāko 'old'. Amharic makes no distinction between maternal and paternal relationships, as are made elsewhere in Semitic Ethiopian: Te. hal : 'ab(u), Har. kāka : izēr, Gaf. āmm<sup>w</sup>āya : əstabb<sup>w</sup>ä, South Arg. abo- : ami-.

akəst 'aunt' : South Arg. akista, Har. əxista, Gaf. akkəst. Reinisch's derivation<sup>1</sup> from something along the lines of Khm. ig zin 'uncle's sister' is not totally convincing. It is not impossible that this item should be related to a similar form as that underlying the term for 'uncle'; in this connexion note also Gimira akes 'grandparent'. Again Amharic makes no distinction between maternal and paternal relationships, but: Tna. hatənnə : 'ammo, Har. əxista : anna, Gaf. akkəst : ästim<sup>w</sup>itä, and so on. amat ~ amač<sup>2</sup> : Gz.Te. hamat 'mother-in-law', Tna. hamat 'mother/daughter-in-law', Har. hamāt 'mother-in-law', hamāči 'father-in-law', Arg. hamač 'father-in-law', Ch. amat 'mother-in-law', amak'ä 'father-in-law', Ms.Sod.Wl. amač 'father-in-law', etc. The S.Ethiopian forms for 'father-in-law' suggest a reconstruction <sup>+</sup>hamati, with -i perhaps formally analogous to the <sup>+</sup>-ati ~ -at plural suffix alternation. The root is Semitic, cf. Ar. ham 'father-in-law', hamāt

1. in Die Bilin-Sprache, Vol.2, Wien 1887, p. 19.

2. The dictionaries (Guidi, Baeteman, Gankin) show a range of overlapping meanings: amat 'mother/brother/son/daughter-in-law'; amač 'father/brother/sister/daughter-in-law'. See Tubiana, 'Les noms de parenté en amharique', GLECS, VI, 1951-4, p. 51: 'la confusion peut s'expliquer par l'occurrence de deux formes, l'une guèze hamat (devenue normalement amat en amharique) "belle-mère"; "bru" (Dillm. 77), l'autre amh. amač, connue déjà de Dillm. comme "child or parent-in-law".'.



'mother-in-law'. The simple form of the root occurs in Semitic Ethiopian chiefly in N.Eth., cf. Gz.Te. ham, Tna. hamu, but note also Gaf. am<sup>w</sup>ä.

ayat 'grandparent' : A possible derivation of this item, which appears to have no formal cognates elsewhere in Sem.Eth. is from Cabiy

Gz.'great' + the suffix -at discussed above. A similar semantic development can be observed in Tna. 'addä Cabbay 'grandmother', lit. 'great mother', or perhaps in Te. 'ab<sup>c</sup>ab 'grandfather', in which -C<sup>c</sup>ab might derive from the root C<sup>c</sup>by. Note also Khm. xäy äbbä 'grandfather' and xäy enä 'grandmother', where xäy is the adjective 'great'. Amongst the other Semitic Ethiopian languages a composite form is used: Gaf. yab<sup>w</sup>ä ab<sup>w</sup>ä 'grandfather', Tna. 'abbo haggio, 'addä Cabbay. A sex distinction is made in some languages: Arg. baba : imahal, Har. bāb : umma, Gaf. yab<sup>w</sup>ä ab<sup>w</sup>ä : äm<sup>w</sup>itāta. In connexion with the last form note also Gondare Amh. ämmita 'grandparent' and äm(m)it 'great-grandparent'.

ännat 'mother' : Tna. 'änno, Har. ināy 'lady, matron'. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> derives this from Gz. 'ämm and hence common Semitic 'm. Whilst the development m > n is not unknown in Semitic Ethiopian, the typical environment for such a change immediately before a dental is absent here. There do, however, exist satisfactory formal and semantic cognates in Cushitic: Saho-Afar inā 'mother', Khm. enä ~ inä. Semitic 'm is preserved elsewhere in Sem.Eth.: Gz. 'ämm, Te. 'äm, Arg. äm, Gaf. äm<sup>w</sup>it and, of course, in Amh. ämmäbet 'mistress', wändäm(m) 'brother' and the vocatives ämma ~ ämma ~ ämmaye.

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 59 and p. 143; see also Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, p. 96.

Other modern Sem.Eth. languages also have probable non-Semitic items for 'mother': Tna. 'addä, Ch. adot, Enn.End. adōd, Sl.Wl. əndät.

ət 'sister' : Gz. 'əht, Tna. hawti<sup>1</sup>, Te. hət, Arg. əhəd, Har. əhit, Old Amh. hət<sup>2</sup>. Common Semitic 'h-t.

bal 'husband' : Gz.Tna.Te. bā<sup>c</sup>al 'master, husband', Gaf. bal. Common Semitic b<sup>c</sup>l. The other Sem.Eth. languages use the same item as 'man': Tna. sāb'ay, Gz. bə'si, mət, Te. bə'əs, or 'lord' as Har. aboč. Some of the S.Eth. languages have a special item, Ch. məs, Arg. mis, a masculine counterpart of Amh. mist<sup>3</sup>.

ləğ 'child' : Gz. ləd in the phrase lədä bet 'slave born into a household (Gk. oikogenēs)', Har. liği, Sl.Wl.Arg. ləğ, Ch. ärč, M. yəğ, Enn.End. äč, etc. This is from the common Semitic root wld 'beget'; for the particular nominal derivation pattern with this sense note Akk. līdu 'bastard'. Sex distinction is made in Amharic by compounding, but some of the other Sem.Eth. languages have separate lexemes: Har. liği : kaḥat, Ch. ärč : gäräd, Tna. wäddi : g<sup>w</sup>al, Gz. wäld : wälätt. Ludolf<sup>4</sup> records a corresponding feminine ləğət ~ ləğit for Amharic, which also occurs occasionally in modern Amharic. mərat 'sister/daughter-in-law' : Gz. mār<sup>c</sup>at 'sister-in-law', Tna.Te. mār<sup>c</sup>at 'bride'. The root is r<sup>c</sup>w, cf. Ar. ur<sup>c</sup>ūwa 'yoke of oxen', Heb. re<sup>c</sup>ā 'friend', rā<sup>c</sup>ā 'join, befriend'.

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1. A secondary development from masculine haw.  
 2. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 48.  
 3. See below under mist.  
 4. Ludolf, op.cit., p. 4.



mist ~ mōšt 'wife' : Har. mišti, Arg.Z. mōst, M.Ch.Sod. mōšt;

N.Eth. cognates have initial b- :

Gz. bə'sit 'woman'. Among the S.Eth. languages Harari, Argobba, and Čäha have corresponding masculine forms: Har. miš 'fellow', Arg. mis 'husband', Ch. mōs, to which Gz. bə'si 'man' and Te. bə'əs 'husband' may be compared. For the b : m alternation Cohen<sup>1</sup> suggests interference in S.Ethiopian from Gz. māt 'man, husband'. However, sporadic instances of a b : m alternation do occur elsewhere in Amharic<sup>2</sup>. The palatalization s > š in some of the S.Eth. forms could have been conditioned by the following i : <sup>+</sup>mōsit > mōš(ə)t; those S.Eth. forms without palatalization may have arisen from a metathesized form <sup>+</sup>misōt > mist, mōst. The Eth. root b's (Gz. bə'sä 'be harsh, bad') is common Semitic. For the semantic development from 'be bad, strong' to 'man' compare Heb. geber 'man' and gābar 'be strong'.

wāndəm(m) 'brother': Te. wād 'əm beside hu 'brother'.

This item is a compound of wānd 'male, son' and -əm(m) 'mother', a bound morph in Amharic<sup>3</sup>. The inherited Semitic item for 'brother' occurs elsewhere in Sem.Eth., but is lost in Amharic: Gz. 'əh<sup>w</sup>, Tna. haw, Te. hu, Har. əh, Arg. äh. This might perhaps have been because of the inherent phonetic weakness of the resultant form which would have been <sup>+</sup>ə in Amharic. S.Ethiopian languages other than Harari and Argobba, which preserve the inherited Semitic term, use a variety of forms: Ch. g<sup>w</sup>äp<sup>h</sup>ä, Gaf. alä, etc.

1. Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 421.

2. See Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 58; Cohen, Etudes d'éthiopien méridional, p. 387ff; Ullendorff, The Semitic languages of Ethiopia, p. 101-2.

3. See above, p. 115.

warsa 'brother/sister-in-law' : the derivation of this item from Eth. wrs 'inherit' and thence common Semitic wrt would appear to reflect the custom of levirate.

c) parts of the body

- af 'mouth' : Gz.Tna.Te. 'af, Har.Arg. af, etc.  
Common Semitic.
- afōnča 'nose' : Gz. 'anf, Ḥamasen Tna. 'anfi, Te. 'andf, Har. ūf, Gaf. af<sup>w</sup>ä, etc. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> rightly explains Amh. afōnča as a metathesis of +anf + -əč(č)a. Common Semitic.
- ammāmā 'hurt' : Gz. ḥammā 'be sick', Tna. ḥamāmā, Te. ḥamma. Common Semitic hmm 'be hot, feverish'.
- amot 'bile' : Gz.Tna. ḥamot, Gaf. amotä, Z. amut, etc. Semitic, cf. Ar. ḥuma 'venom', Heb. ḥemā, Akk. imtu.
- andäbät 'tongue' : Har. arrät, M.Sod. allämät, Ch. anäbät, Sl.Wl.Z. arämät, etc. This item is of East Cushitic origin, cf. Galla arraba, Som. carrab, Sid. arrabo, Saho anrab, etc.
- ang<sup>w</sup>äl 'brain' : Tna. ḥang<sup>w</sup>äl, Te. ḥangäl, Har. ḥangulla, Arg. ang<sup>w</sup>äl. Cushitic, cf. Saho-Afar hangal, Bil. hang<sup>w</sup>äl, Som. ḥangulla.
- angät 'neck' : Te. 'angät, Har. angät, Arg. angäd; note also Tna. ḥngt in täḥangätä 'to strap round the neck and shoulders'.  
This item has been connected<sup>2</sup> with Sem. ḥnq ~ c<sup>n</sup>q :  
Gz. ḥanākä 'strangle', Amh. annākä, Ar. c<sup>n</sup>q 'neck', Heb. c<sup>n</sup>ānāq 'necklace'. This does not seem unlikely, allowing for an

1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 94.

2. ibid., p. 72. Note also Old Amh. hangät (Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 6).



unpredictable shift of k to g.

anġāt 'innards' : Gaf. anzätä, Ch.M.Ms. anzät, Sod. anžät,  
Old Amh. hanžät<sup>1</sup>. This has been derived<sup>2</sup>  
from Gz. hōms 'uterus'<sup>3</sup> (ie. from some-  
thing like <sup>+</sup>hams + äyt). The expected development of such a  
form would be <sup>+</sup>anšät in Amharic, but a voicing of s to z  
in this position would not be inconceivable. The root hms  
is of Semitic origin, cf. Heb. homeš 'belly'.

ar 'faeces' : Tna. har'i, Te. harə', M.Ch.Sod. arä.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. hur', Heb. h<sup>a</sup>ri<sup>4</sup>.

aṭənt 'bone' : Gz. Caṣm, Tna. Cašmi, Har. āt, Arg. haṭəm,  
Gaf. ašm<sup>w</sup>ä, etc. The Amharic is the only  
form to have a suffix -t; this probably  
originates from the plural, cf. Gz. 'aCṣəmt, ie. collective/  
plural used as singular, cf. ṭat 'finger', below. Common  
Semitic Cṣm.

ayn 'eye' : Gz.Te. Cayn, Tna. Cayni, Har.Sl.Wl.Z. in,  
Arg.Ch. en, Gaf. inä, etc. Common Semitic  
Cyn.

əḡər 'foot' : Gz. 'əgr, Tna. 'əgri, Te. 'əgər,  
Har. iḡir ~ ingir, Arg. ingir, Gaf. əḡ<sup>w</sup>rä,  
etc. Semitic, cf. Daṭina Ar. and Palestinian  
Ar. 'iḡr.

əḡ 'hand' : Gz. 'əd, Tna. 'id, Te. 'əde, Har. iḡi,  
Arg.Sl.Wl. ənḡ, etc. The palatalization  
in S.Ethiopian is probably due to the  
form 'əde, occurring in Ge'ez before pronoun suffixes.  
Common Semitic yd.

1. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 6; also Littmann, 'Altamharisches Glossar',  
RSO, XX, p. 484.

2. Reinsch, Die Bilin-Sprache, Vol.2, p. 36; also Guidi,  
Vocabolario, col. 469.

3. See əms, below.

4. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la  
phonétique du chamito-sémitique, Paris 1969, no. 154.

ənbərt 'navel' : Gz. hənbərt, Tna. həmbərti, Te. həmbər, Har. hamburti, Arg. əmbərt, etc. This item is probably of Cushitic origin, cf. Som. hündūr, Galla handura, Saho hindub ~ handub; the Agaw languages have what is probably a related form, Kem. gāmbāra, Quara gumbera, etc., which was borrowed into Gafat as gumbərā and Gondare Amharic as gəmbəra. The underlying form of the other Sem.Eth. forms is <sup>+</sup>hənbər + (t), to which the East Cushitic forms in particular may be compared. It has been suggested that the Sem.Eth. forms might be related to Ar. nabra 'excrescence' or to Heb. ṭabbūr 'navel'. The Cushitic forms, however, would seem to provide better formal fits.

əms 'vagina' : Gz. həmə. Common Semitic, cf. Heb. ḥomes 'belly', Akk. emšu, etc.

ənba ~ ənb 'tear' : Gz. 'anbə<sup>c</sup>, Tna. nəb<sup>c</sup>at, Te. 'ənbə<sup>c</sup>, Har. əbi', Arg. əmbi, Gaf. əmb<sup>w</sup>ä, etc. Common Semitic nb<sup>c</sup> 'flow, gush forth'.

əwwər 'blind' : Gz.Tna.Te. <sup>c</sup>əwur, Arg. əwwur, Gaf. əwwurä, etc. Common Semitic <sup>c</sup>wr.

čamma 'sole of the foot' : M.Sod.Wl. čamma. From Agaw, specifically S.Agaw čammi; other Agaw forms are Bil. šanfi, Kem. šamba,

Kh. šabā, etc.

čən 'thigh' : Arg.Gaf. čən 'thigh', Wl. čən 'back', Har. čən 'waist', and probably also Ch. kīn ~ k'in 'behind'. There have

been several attempts at the etymology of this item from Praetorius<sup>1</sup>, who sought to derive it from Gz. śānt 'rib', to Wajnberg<sup>2</sup>, who proposed Gz. həṣn 'lap' as its origin,

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 95.

2. Wajnberg, 'Dualreste und Dualspuren im Neuabessinischen', RO, XIII, p. 20.



and Cohen<sup>1</sup>, who suggested a connexion with Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ərna<sup>c</sup> 'elbow'. All three are unlikely on phonetic grounds alone. In the light of Ch. kin and the fairly wide but consistent semantic range of the Semitic Ethiopian cognates, one wonders whether \*kən > ḥən might be connected with the root kn<sup>c</sup> 'be straight'<sup>2</sup>.

dām 'blood' : so throughout Sem.Eth. Common Semitic.

dānkoro 'deaf' : Tna. dānk<sup>w</sup>āro, Ch. tānk<sup>w</sup>arra; probably to be connected with Gz. dānkōw, Har.Sl. dōnka, Gaf. dōnku-, etc.

Cushitic, cf. Galla donko 'stupid', Alaba dōnkā, Khm. dōnq<sup>w</sup>er, perhaps also Som. dōqon 'fool' and the common Agaw term for 'donkey', Bil. dōq<sup>w</sup>āra, Khm. dōg<sup>w</sup>āra, etc.<sup>3</sup>.

fit 'face' : Har. fīt, Arg. fid, Ch.E.Gy. yift, Sl.Wl. uft, Z. ōfit, etc. Common Semitic, cf. Akk. pūtu 'forehead',

Heb. pe'ā 'corner, side (esp. of the head)', Soq. fio 'forehead'.

gubbāt 'liver' : M.Sod.Wl. gōbb<sup>w</sup>ot. Praetorius<sup>4</sup> related this to Semitic kbd via \*gub(b)ād + t, which is conceivable allowing for the unpredictable voicing of k to g, but see nod, below.

gulbāt 'knee' : Har. gōlib, Gaf.Arg.M.Ms.Go.Sod.Z. gulbāt, Ch.E. g<sup>w</sup>urbāt, etc. All the S.Eth. forms, except Har. gōlib, can be derived from a common \*g<sup>w</sup>ōlbāt; the item does not occur in N.Eth<sup>5</sup>.

Cushitic, cf. Bil.Khm. gīrb, Kem. gōrbi, Dembiya gulbē; also occurring in E.Cushitic, cf. Saho-Afar gulub, Som. ḡilib,

1. Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 182; also Etudes d'éthiopien méridional, p. 109.

2. See below, under kāñ.

3. Cohen, 'Une dénomination commune de l'âne et de la surdité en chamito-sémitique', GLECS, VI, p. 15-16.

4. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 85, where he cites Ludolf's gubbād.

5. Tna. gulbāt in the sense of 'strength' is probably an amharicism.

Galla ġilba, Qabena ġulubīta, Sid. ġuliččō. There have been attempts to connect the S.Ethiopian item to Semitic roots, qlb and ġlb<sup>1</sup>, but in the light of the Cushitic forms with close formal and semantic fit, these etymologies may be discounted.

ġunč 'cheek' : Tna. ġ<sup>w</sup>ōnči, Har. ġunči, Arg. ġumbāč, Ch.E. ġ<sup>w</sup>inčā, etc. Wajnberg<sup>2</sup> suggests

this might be an old 'dual' of the same root as seen in Gz. ġās 'face', ie. \*ġ<sup>w</sup>ō(n)se.

Such a form would regularly result in Amh. ġunč and the other S.Eth. forms, but this etymology does seem a little forced, especially since 'dual' forms in Semitic Ethiopian are all fossilized forms, the category 'dual' no longer being productive even at the earliest recorded stage of Semitic Ethiopian, and are in any case restricted to inherited Semitic forms, whilst ġās is of Agaw origin<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, possible cognates for ġunč, etc., are found in Sid. ġāččō 'chin', Qabena ġečča.

ġōra 'left' : Tna. ġōraw 'left-handed', Arg. ġōra, Har. ġura 'west'<sup>4</sup>, Gaf. ġōrā, etc.

Cushitic, cf. Afar ġura, Som. ġuré, Sid. ġuraččō, Kem. ġōri. Leslau's suggestion<sup>5</sup> that ġōra should be related to Semitic ġrb 'west' seems less likely than the Cushitic explanation.

ġurāro 'throat' : Gz. ġ<sup>w</sup>ōrce, Tna. ġ<sup>w</sup>ōrāro, ġ<sup>w</sup>ōrg<sup>w</sup>ōrit 'goitre', Te. ġōr<sup>ce</sup>, ġ<sup>w</sup>ārāra, Gaf. ġurarā, Ch. ġ<sup>w</sup>ōrār. From common Semitic ġr<sup>c</sup> 'swallow' and ġrēr 'throat', cf. Heb. ġarg<sup>e</sup>rōt, Akk. ġagġurītu.

1. Praetorius, op.cit., p. 67 and 72.

2. Wajnberg, op.cit., p. 19-23.

3. Bil. ġās, Kem. ġās, Khm. ġās.

4. See Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, Los Angeles 1963, pp. 74.

5. Leslau, Etude descriptive et comparative du Gafat, Paris 1956, p. 203.



ġoro 'ear' : occurring only in Amharic, the other Sem.Eth. languages all preserve the common Semitic item, Gz. 'ōzn, etc.

Amh. ġoro is probably to be connected with Galla ġurra.

ġārba 'back' : Te. ġurbāt. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> related Amh. ġārba to Semitic ḍbr. There are, however, widespread Cushitic forms which can certainly explain the Tigre item and are more satisfactory in explaining the Amharic term: Bil. ġurbat, Khm. ġirbā, Quara ġibrā, Som. ġārab 'shoulder-blade'.

hod 'belly' : Gz. kābd 'liver', Tna. kābdi, Te. kābəd, Har. kūd, Ch. xāpt, etc. Common Semitic kbd. The Amharic term for 'liver' is ġubbāt, which, as noted above, may be a variant development from the same original root.

kulalit 'kidney' : Gz.Tna. k<sup>w</sup>əlīt, Te. kəlkal'ot, Har. kulāy, Arg. kullay, Gaf. kullalit, etc.; note also Old Amh. həlalit<sup>2</sup>.

All the S.Ethiopian forms may be derived from a partially reduplicated stem <sup>+</sup>k<sup>w</sup>əlali-. Common Semitic kly.

kənd 'forearm' : Gz.Tna. k<sup>w</sup>ərna<sup>C</sup>, Har. kuru', Arg. kərri, Gaf. kəndä, Ch.Gy. xənä, Sl. kəri, etc. Amharic also has the item kərn 'elbow'

which is apparently from the same root, but does not exhibit the usual development rn > nd. Guidi<sup>3</sup> records older forms of this item, kərna (NCŋ:, NCŋδ:), which suggest, perhaps, the direct influence of Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ərna<sup>C</sup>. On the other hand, kənd is the regular development of <sup>+</sup>kərnə<sup>C</sup>. Common Semitic kr<sup>C</sup>, cf. Ar. kura<sup>C</sup> 'foot', etc.

1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 86, 94.

2. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 47.

3. Guidi, Vocabolario amarico-italiano, col. 527.

- kānfār 'lip' : Gz.Tna. kānfār, Te. kāmfār, etc. It is somewhat difficult to decide whether this is to be connected with Moroccan Arabic kafūra ~ xanfōra 'groin' or Agaw, Bil. kanfar, Quara kanpar, Kem. kāmfār 'lip'<sup>1</sup>. The latter could, of course, be taken from Semitic Ethiopian.
- kula 'testicles' : Old Amh. k<sup>w</sup>olha. This is almost certainly of Semitic origin and to be compared with Mehri qali 'egg', Šheri qahalīt, Soq. qehélihen; note also Maghrebi Ar. galwa (pl. qlāwi) 'testicle'. The same Sem.Eth. root, <sup>+</sup>k<sup>w</sup>lh appears in Amh. onkulal 'egg'<sup>2</sup>.
- kintār 'clitoris': Tna. kōntār, Te. kāntirāt, Har. kōntār, etc. Semitic, cf. Datina Ar. qantār, Soq. qantar. The same item also occurs in E.Cushitic: Som. kintir, Galla kintir, etc.
- kān 'right' : Arg. kānna, Gaf. kōn, Har. kānit 'warp'<sup>3</sup>, Ch. kānā, etc. An adjective of the pattern qatīl from the Sem.Eth. root kn<sup>c</sup> 'be straight' (Tna. kān<sup>c</sup>e, Amh. kānna), which is probably to be connected with Ar. qn<sup>c</sup> 'satisfy', ESA ton<sup>c</sup>.
- kit 'anus' : Praetorius<sup>4</sup> connects this with Gz. k<sup>w</sup>iys ~ k<sup>w</sup>is 'shin', which may well be so, though the semantics are a little awkward. In any case, the ultimate origin of this item is almost certainly Agaw, cf. Bil. git ~ git, Kem. gōt, Khm. xuda 'anus'; note also Galla huddu 'anus', Som. qōd 'circumcised member'<sup>5</sup>.

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1. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 177.

2. See below, p. 143 .

3. Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 127; cf. Har. gura 'weft' and Amh. gōra 'left'.

4. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 44.

5. Cohen, op.cit., no. 170.



lōbb 'heart' : Gz. lōbb, Tna. lōbbi, Te. lōb, etc.  
Common Semitic.

mālas ~ mōlas 'tongue' : Tna. mālhas, Arg. mālas, Gaf. mōlasä, Old Har. mālhasan. Ethiopian and common Semitic root lhs 'lick'.

The other S.Ethiopian languages use items related to Amh. andäbät, of Cushitic origin.

mōrak 'saliva' : Gz. mōrak, Tna.Te. mōrrak, Har. mōrāk, Arg. mōrač, Ch. ōmbak'ä, etc. The root is wrk (Gz. 'spit'), of common Semitic origin, cf. Heb. yrg.

nāfs 'soul' : Gz. nāfs, Tna.Har. nāfsi, etc. Common Semitic npš.

ras 'head' : Gz. rō's, Tna. rō'si, Te. rā'as, Har. urūs. Note that Amh. ras derives from a qatal pattern, like Te. rā'as; the element ōrs- in the 3rd person pronouns<sup>1</sup>, on the other hand, points to rō's, as in the other Sem.Eth. languages.

riz 'beard' : Arg. ariz, Gaf. ōriz, Z. areda. The Amh., Arg., and Gaf. forms are taken from something like Tembaro äreza, whereas the Z. item probably comes from Galla areda, or Sid. äreda<sup>2</sup>.

samba 'lung' : Gz.Tna. sāmbu<sup>c</sup>, Te. sāmbō<sup>c</sup>, Ch. samb<sup>w</sup>a, etc. Cushitic, probably Agaw, cf. Bil. sāmbi, Kem. sāmba, S.Agaw sambi; but note also Galla somba, Som. sāmbāb.

sōr 'nerve'<sup>3</sup> : Gz. šōrw, Tna. sur ~ sōr, Te.Har. sōr, Arg. sōred, Gaf. sōret, etc. Common

1. See below, p.194 .

2. See Cerulli, Studi Etiopici II, Roma 1938, p. 190, under erēdā: 'l'amarico ha riz, che.....ha conservato l'ultima radicale z già passata in d nel Sidamo e nel Galla'.

3. Also meaning 'root' in Amharic, as in some, but not all of the other Semitic Ethiopian languages.

Semitic, cf. Ar. surra 'umbilical cord', Heb. šōr 'nerve, muscle', Aram. šeryānā 'pulse', etc. This Semitic root is probably a variant of šrš 'root'; the two meanings 'nerve' and 'root' have, for the most part, been collapsed in Sem. Eth. under the one root, šrw.

šōbāt 'grey hair' : Gz. šībāt, Tna. sibāt ~ šōbāt, Te. šib, Har. šībāt, etc. Common Semitic, šyb.

Amharic has formed the denominative verb šābbātā in place of the original verb root form, as in Gz. šebā.

šil 'foetus' : Gz. sōyl, Tna. šōlāt 'afterbirth', Te. sōlet. Common Semitic šly, cf. Ar. salā, Heb. šilyā, etc.

šānnā ~ šānna 'urinate' (n. šōnt) : Gz. šenā, šōnt, Tna. šānā, šōnti. Common Semitic lyn.

tāffa 'spit, vomit' : Gz.Te. tāf'a, Tna. tāf'e, Gaf. tāffā, Ch. tāfam, etc. Several S.Ethiopian languages, including Amharic, have a

descriptive compound derivative with the verb 'to say':

Har. tuf bāya, Arg. ōntōf ala, Amh. ōntōff alā, Z. tōfun bālā, etc. Common Semitic, cf. Ar. taffa, Aram. t<sup>e</sup>pap. Similar forms also occur in Cushitic<sup>1</sup>.

tōnfaš 'breath' : Tna. tōnfas, Har. tōmfāš. From the Sem.Eth. root nfs (Semitic npš)<sup>2</sup>.

tāñña 'sleep' : Har. ñē'a, Arg. teñña, Ch.Gy. nōyām, Sl. ōñe, Z. iñī, Enn. ne'ā, etc., and probably also Tna. nāhayā 'be tired of'.

Amharic treats the t as a radical except in the derived noun māññita (bet) 'bedroom'. The other cognates clearly

1. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 319.

2. See nāfs 'soul', above, p.125, and nāfas 'wind', below, p.161.



show that the underlying root form is nhy or <sup>+</sup>nyh (hence the palatalization to ñ in some S.Eth. languages).

Praetorius<sup>1</sup> connected Sem.Eth. nhy (Gz. tānahayä 'confess sins' ?) with Ar. whn 'be weak, exhausted' via a biradical nominal with the stem <sup>+</sup>hin-. This seems a little contrived, but is, perhaps, not impossible. The other N.Ethiopian languages show a variety of roots: Gz. nwm, skb, Te. skb, Tna. skb, dks; of these nwm and skb have numerous common Semitic cognates.

təfər 'nail' : Gz. ṣəfr, Tna. ṣəfri, Te. ṣəfər,  
Har. ṭifir, Arg. čuffər, Gaf. ṣəfrä,  
etc. Common Semitic zpr.

tägur 'hair' : Gz. säg<sup>w</sup>r, Tna. säg<sup>w</sup>ri, Te. čägər,  
Har. čigär, Arg. čögär, Baf. səgärä,  
etc. It is, perhaps, an interesting

point that Amh. shares the qatl vocalization with N.Eth., whilst all the other S.Eth. languages have the pattern qital (<sup>+</sup>səgär). This item has been connected<sup>2</sup> with Sem. š<sup>c</sup>r, but a closer formal cognate occurs in Cushitic: cf. Som. dögör, Saho tagär, Bil. šög<sup>w</sup>ör<sup>3</sup>.

tərs 'tooth' : Gz. zərs 'molar'. Semitic, cf. Ar. ḏirs. All the other Sem.Eth. languages preserve the Semitic item for 'tooth',  
cf. Gz. sənn.

tat 'finger' : Gz. 'ašba<sup>c</sup>t, Tna. 'ašabə<sup>c</sup>, Te. čəh<sup>c</sup>it,  
Har. aṭābiñña, Arg. ṭad, Gaf. ṣatä,  
Ch. atebä(t), etc. The Amh., Arg., and Gaf. forms may all be derived from <sup>+</sup>šäb<sup>c</sup>at, cf. Old Am. šä'at<sup>4</sup>, which, like the Te. form, does not show the initial ' of the remaining Sem.Eth. forms. Common Semitic 'sb<sup>c</sup>.

1. Praetorius, 'Beiträge zur Äthiopischen Grammatik und Etymologie', BA, I, p. 43.

2. Brockelmann, Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen, Vol.1, p. 169, 239.

3. See Cerulli, Studi Etiopici I, p. 243.

4. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 97.

tut 'breast' : Gz.Te. təb, Tna. tub, Har. tōt, Arg. tut,  
Gaf. tuwä, Ch. tu, etc. Only the Amh.,  
Har., and Arg. forms have a -t suffix:

<sup>+</sup>təbt. Semitic, cf. Ar. tiby 'udder, teat'.

wäzza 'sweat' (vb) : Har. awäza'a, Ch.Enn.Gy. awzasa-, etc.;  
Amh. wäz (n), Har. wūzi', Gaf. wuzä,  
Ch. wūzat. This common Semitic root

(wd<sup>c</sup>) does not occur in N.Ethiopian. Another Amharic  
item with the same meaning is lab (n), alabä (vb), to  
which Tna. lahbät may be compared; cf. Sem. lhb 'burn,  
be parched'.

## II The semantic field 'the domestic environment'

The subdivisions under this heading are a) agricultural activities and implements, b) crops, c) domestic animals, d) food and its preparation, and e) the house. In the field of agricultural terminology we are dealing with an area of the lexicon which is likely to be susceptible to linguistic borrowing and innovation in direct response to cultural borrowing and innovation. The basic methods and processes of agriculture, like ploughing, sowing, reaping, milling and the names of the commoner domestic animals may be regarded in the context of the relevant ecological area as being culturally so non-specific as to be classifiable in lexical terms as 'basic'. It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that the corresponding lexical items are not typically subject to ready borrowing and replacement. This is in contrast to more specific

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items, like the names of local crops, domestic animals, certain specialized tools, and so on. When we turn, then, to these areas of the Amharic lexicon, we find that whilst the 'basic' vocabulary is mainly of inherited Semitic origin, there is a considerable number of non-Semitic terms amongst crop and animal names. In historical terms this can be interpreted as evidence that the **Objects of agriculture in Ethiopia owe not a little to the indigenous, non-Semitic population.** Indeed, it appears<sup>1</sup> that the Ethiopian plateau and surrounding areas were a centre of plant domestication and dispersal from an early period, long before the earliest conjectured arrival of the Semites<sup>2</sup>. Crops such as ṭef (*poa abyssinica*), nug (*guizotia abyssinica*) were domesticated locally, whilst others like wheat (sōnde), barley (gäbs), finger millet (dagussa), and flax (tälba) seem to have reached Ethiopia early on<sup>3</sup>. The names of many of these cereals are of non-Semitic origin, most probably from Agaw. An exception to this is barley (gäbs), which may be Semitic. The term for wheat (sōnde) is probably of Cushitic origin, though perhaps only as the contamination of an original Semitic form. Of course, this does not mean to say that the crop itself was unknown to the incoming Semites. Other crop names like atär 'pea', bakela 'bean', mössör 'lentil', bärbäre 'chilli pepper', etc., are loans from outside Ethiopia, mostly either from or through the medium of Arabic.

Amongst the names of domestic animals we find bäre 'ox', däbäl 'kid', färäs 'horse', gömäl 'camel', gölgäl 'young

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1. See Gamst, The Qemant: a pagan-hebraic peasantry of Ethiopia, New York 1969, p. 11-12; also Simoons, 'Economic prehistory of Ethiopia', in Papers in African prehistory, ed. Fage and Oliver, Cambridge 1970, p. 124 ff.

2. ie. 1st millennium B.C.

3. Conti Rossini, La storia d'Etiopia, Bergamo 1928, p. 106 attributes the introduction of 'molte piante utili specialmente per l'alimentazione' to the South Arabians, but see Gamst, op.cit., and Simoons, op.cit.

animal', lam 'cow' and kābt 'cattle' of inherited Semitic origin, whilst items like ahōyya 'donkey', dōmmāt 'cat', doro 'chicken', fōyāl 'goat', wōšša 'dog', and probably bāg 'sheep' and bāklo 'mule' are of non-Semitic origin<sup>1</sup>. Of these only the last two, bāg and bāklo, have cognates distributed throughout Semitic Ethiopian; doro and dōmmāt are common to N.Ethiopian and Amharic; wōšša and fōyāl are common to Amharic and neighbouring S.Ethiopian languages (Argobba and Gafat); ahōyya, at the other end of the scale, occurs only in Amharic and has no other cognates in Semitic Ethiopian. In the case of these restricted loans we are probably dealing with localized items and, indeed, the likely source languages are identifiable in each instance<sup>2</sup>. When we examine these items in other Semitic Ethiopian languages we find a wide array of forms from various sources, including local Cushitic languages (Har. adurru 'cat' from Galla; Har. buči 'dog' also from Galla; Gaf. kuttā 'chicken' from Sidamo, and so on), and inherited Semitic not preserved in Amharic (Tna. kālbi 'dog'; Har. ṭāy 'goat').

In the field of food terms etc., the following items are of clear Semitic origin: ayb 'cheese', ḡrat 'evening meal', bōrz 'honeyed water', bsl 'be cooked, ripe', doḡet 'flour', k<sup>w</sup>rs 'break bread', mar 'honey', mōsa 'midday meal', ḡrgo (/rga) 'yoghurt', and ṭōre 'fresh, raw'. Probably also of inherited Semitic origin are bokka 'ferment', fälla 'boil', kōbe 'butter', māsob 'basket table', mōṭad 'griddle', ṭbs 'fry', and wāt 'stew', though the precise derivation of

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1. Ar. baḡl 'mule' is a loan from Sem.Eth.; see below, p.140.

2. doro (Saho-Afar), dōmmāt (Agaw), wōšša (Sidamo), fōyāl (Agaw), ahōyya (Saho-Afar, probably).



these items is not clear and likely Semitic cognates are of weak formal and/or semantic fit. Perhaps more than in the other areas of the lexicon discussed here, food terms are subject to borrowing and influence from outside as fashions fluctuate and trade introduces new food crops. Thus, the names for all the typical spices, ard, bärbäre, zənǎǎbəl, etc., table equipment like ǧäbāna 'coffee pot', fənǧal 'coffee cup', sāhan 'plate', dəst 'cooking pot', šukka 'fork', etc., and fruits like muz 'banana' and lomi 'lime', not to mention more recent introductions, are all loans mostly from or through the agency of Arabic.

Probable Cushitic contributions to food terminology in Amharic are bäso 'roasted barley flour', čoma 'fatty meat', čāw 'salt', k<sup>w</sup>anta 'dried meat', šoro 'chickpea paste', šombāra 'chickpeas', and probably also ənǧāra 'bread', tälla 'beer' and tǎǧǧ 'honey wine'.

Of the names of the parts of the house etc., for which a satisfactory etymology can be established, the majority is inherited Semitic. These Semitic items are typically names of the most basic and 'primitive' architectural features, like atör 'fence', bärr 'door, gate', bet 'house', dǧǧ 'gateway', mändär 'village', kədan 'thatch', məsāso 'centre pole', and probably also mədǧǧǧa 'hearth'. The greater part of the names of other parts of the house etc., like g<sup>w</sup>ada, ṭara, walta, gullǧǧǧa, and constructional features like gotāra, gomb, kab, etc., remain unidentified as to origin. The few readily identifiable Cushitic items here are gədgədda 'wattle and daub wall', koṭ 'loft, high shelf', goṭo 'straw hut'. More advanced and sophisticated terms

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like därb 'upper story', fok 'storeyed building', däräṣa 'staircase', örkan idem, etc., are of Arabic origin.

In the field of the domestic environment, therefore, there is a relatively high proportion of non-Semitic loan material (25 items out of a total of 93 - 26.9%), all of which consist of names of specific animals (seven items), plants (nine items), or foodstuffs (nine items). To these may be added the three architectural terms noted above. Perhaps the most fundamental observation that can be made here and, incidentally also in the field of the natural environment<sup>1</sup>, is that broadly speaking general terms are inherited Semitic, but the specific and typically Ethiopian terms are of non-Semitic origin. Certain crops like sōnde, dagussa, tälba are known to have been cultivated in Ethiopia for a very long time and others like nug and tef are particular native domestications. The lexicon here directly reflects the cultural contribution of the non-Semitic peoples of Ethiopia. No such clear pattern emerges from the names of domestic animals, many of which were certainly known both to the indigenous population and to the incoming Semites. The inherited Semitic names for some domestic animals which Amharic has replaced by Cushitic terms do survive elsewhere in Semitic Ethiopian: exx. Tna. kälbi 'dog', etc., Har. ṭāy 'goat', etc. Perhaps the only instance of a non-Semitic lexical item in Amharic and the other Semitic Ethiopian languages reflecting a possible indigenous origin of the animal itself is bāklo 'mule'. The breeding of this domestic animal appears not to have been known to the Semites until a relatively late date<sup>2</sup>. At least, it does seem likely

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1. See below, p. 150.

2. See Hommel, Die Namen der Säugethiere bei den südsemitischen Völkern, Leipzig 1879, p. 112 ff.



that the mule was introduced into Arabia from across the Red Sea, as the evidence of Ar. baʿl, a loan from Gz. bäkl, suggests. All this contrasts directly with the situation in the field of general agricultural terms, all of which are of Semitic origin in Amharic. This would only seem to confirm, if indeed confirmation were necessary, that plough cultivation was practised by the incoming Semites, as it already was by the indigenous highland Cushites, the Agaws.

a) agricultural activities and implements

- aččädä 'reap' : Gz.Tna. Cašädä, Gaf. aššädä, Sod. addädäm. The palatalization of the medial radical in Amharic may have arisen in the imperfect (yäCaš(s)äd > yačäd), or the gerundive (Cašido > ač(ə)do). Common Semitic Cäd.
- alläbä 'milk' : Gz.Tna. haläbä, Te. halba, Har. haläba, Arg. halläba, etc. Common Semitic hīb.
- arrämä 'weed' : Har. haram (n), Arg. harräma, Ch. anämäm, etc. All the S.Eth. forms go back to a B-type conjugation of hrm, which occurs in N.Eth. in the A-type conjugation, meaning 'prohibit, be prohibited' (Gz. harämä, etc.). Common Semitic hrm.
- arräsä 'plough' : Gz.Tna. haräsä, Te. harsa, Har. haräsa, Arg. harräsa, etc. Common Semitic hrt.
- bäkkälä 'sprout' : Gz. bäkwälä, Tna. bäxwälä, Te. bäklä, Har. bäkäla, etc. Common Semitic bql.
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fäččä 'mill' : Gz. fäšha 'break into pieces',  
Tna. fässəhe 'grind', Har. fäča,  
Arg. fäčča, Sl.Wl. fäče, etc.

The S.Eth. forms all appear to derive from a root <sup>+</sup>fšy,  
beside N.Eth. fšh. Semitic, cf. Ar. fadda 'break open',  
fadaha 'expose', Heb. pāšah 'crush', pāšā 'split', etc.

käččä 'mow' : Gz.Tna. käsäyā, Sl.Wl. koče.  
Semitic, cf. Heb. qissā 'peel'.

kädä 'draw water': Gz.Te. kādha, Tna. kādhe, Har. kādaha,  
Arg. käddäha, etc. Semitic, cf.  
Ar. qadaha 'bore', Heb. qādah.

kāmbär 'yoke' : Tna.Arg. kāmbär, Gaf. kāmbärä, and  
probably also Gz. kāmār 'iunctura  
trabium'. Possibly Semitic if the  
connexion made by Praetorius<sup>1</sup> with Syr. qamrā 'belt' is  
correct. The item also occurs in Cushitic, cf. Galla kambari,  
Sid. kambarā.

kärrämä 'glean' : Gz.Tna. kärämä, Har. kärma (n) 'wheat  
stalk used in basket weaving', Sl.  
kärme 'stubble' (Amh. kärm, idem).

Semitic, cf. Ar. qarama 'gnaw', qurma 'tree stump'. One is  
also tempted to suggest a connexion with the common Semitic  
root krm 'vineyard', etc.

mā 'upper grindstone' : Gz. mädhe, Har. māḡḡi, Ch. māḡä,  
Sl. māḡḡe, etc. The root is dhy  
(Gz. däḡayä 'grind'), to which Heb.

dāḡā 'push, thrust' and Ar. dahā 'spread' may be compared.

māṣē ~ māṣən 'winnowing basket' : Gz. māśce, Tna. māśce,  
from the root ścy. Semitic, cf. Ar. šaḡā.

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 100.



näffa 'sieve' : Gz.Tna. näfäyā, Te.Har. nāfa, etc.  
The instrumental noun is wänfit in Amharic, which has cognates throughout Sem.Eth: Gz. mänfe, Tna. mänfit, Har. wänfīt, Z. wäfit, etc. Semitic, cf. Heb. nippā (vb), nāpā (n.).

sälläbä 'castrate': Gz. säläbä 'pull out', Tna. säläbä 'castrate', Te. sälba, Har. säläba, etc. Semitic, cf. Ar. salaba.

täkkälä 'plant' : Gz. täkälä, Tna. täxälä, Te. täkla, Arg. tekkäla, Sl.Wl. čehälä, etc.  
Formal cognates occur in Ar. takiḥa 'trust', Aram. t<sup>e</sup>kel; the semantic correlation between these and the Sem.Eth. item 'plant, fix' is weak but not inconceivable.

ṭämmädä 'yoke' (vb): Gz. ṣämädä, Tna. ṣämädä, Te. ṣämḍa, Har. ṭämäda. Common Semitic dmd.

zärä 'sow' : Gz.Te. zär'a, Tna. zär'e, Har. zära'a, Ch. zānam, etc. Common Semitic dr<sup>c</sup> ~ dr'.<sup>1</sup>

#### b) crops

atär 'pea' : Tna.Te. Ḳatär 'chickpea', Har. atär 'pea', Ch. atärä 'bean', etc. This is almost certainly a loan from Aden

Ar. Ḳatar. The term, however, also occurs in some Cushitic languages: Kambatta atarä, Galla atara, Khm. adīr, Kem. azär.<sup>2</sup>

1. It is, perhaps, interesting to note that the form of this root with final radical ' occurs outside Semitic Ethiopian only in ESA in the month name dr'.

2. See Conti Rossini, La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, p.174, "la variété qu'on a pu étudier dans le nord d'Ethiopie est le cicer arietinum, et qui semble originaire du bassin oriental de la Méditerranée, d'où il aurait été importé dans le Yemen et en Abyssinie."

- əhəl 'grain' : Gz. 'əkl, Tna. 'əxli, Te. 'əkəl,  
Har. əxi, Arg. əhəl, etc. Common  
Semitic, 'kl 'eat'.
- əšāt 'unripe grain': Gz. šāwit, Tna. sāwwit ~ šāwwit,  
Te. šāwit, Har. ašīta ~ asīta,  
Arg. əšed, Gaf. əšāt, etc. The S.Eth.  
forms all derive from \*sāyit, with attraction of w to y  
under the influence of the following i. The Sem.Eth. root  
is šwy 'ripen' (Gz. šāwāyā), which is to be connected with  
Ar. šwy IV 'aptum fuit triticum ut confricaretur ad edendum'.  
bakela 'bean' : Te.Wl.Z. bakela, Har. bākela, etc.  
From Ar. baqilā'. The Semitic root  
bql exists in Sem.Eth. (cf. bākḳālā  
'sprout'), but this nominal item is almost certainly an  
Arabic loan.
- bun ~ bunna 'coffee' : so throughout Sem.Eth. and Cushitic  
languages; a loan from Ar. bunn.
- bārbāre 'chilli pepper' : Gz. bārbāre, pāpāre, Tna.Te.Arg.  
Wl.Z. bārbāre, Har. bārbāri, etc.  
The alternative Ge'ez form, pāpāre,  
looks like a direct loan from Gk. péperi, whereas bārbāre  
is probably from another source. Non-Ethiopian Semitic  
languages have plpl ~ flfl. The form brbr occurs in Cushitic.  
Whatever the immediate origin of bārbāre is, the ultimate  
source is probably Indian, cf. Sanskrit pippala.
- čat 'catha edulis': so throughout Semitic Ethiopian. This  
item is undoubtedly related to Ar. qāt  
of the same meaning. Since the plant  
itself appears to be of Ethiopian origin, it would seem  
reasonable to assume that the name is, too, and that Arabic  
has borrowed the term from Ethiopia. The item also occurs  
widely throughout Cushitic.
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dagussa 'finger millet': Tna.Te. dagussa. Cushitic,  
cf. Bil. dāgūsā, Khm. daūsā, Quara  
daušā, S.Agaw dāguṣī, Galla daguzá ~  
dagučá, etc.

dənnəč 'potato' : Tna.Te. dənnəč, Har. dinničča,  
Ch. dəniča, etc. The name originally  
referred to the edible root Coleus  
tuberosus<sup>1</sup>, but is now applied to the potato, Solanum  
tuberosum. From Galla dinničča 'the Galla potato, Coleus  
edulis'<sup>2</sup>.

gābs 'barley' : Har. gūs, Arg.Sod. gābs, Z. gābəs,  
etc. This is generally<sup>3</sup> regarded as  
a metathesized form of Gz. sāgām,  
Tna. səgām; ie. səgām > <sup>+</sup>gām(ə)s > gābs. Gz. sāgām, etc.,  
is probably of Semitic origin, cf. Soq. škímoh 'grain of  
millet'.

məssər 'lentil' : Te. məssər ~ mānsər, Har. missir,  
Arg.Gaf. məssər, Sod. məššərrä, etc.

A different root form occurs in  
Ge'ez and Tigrinya, bərsən. Both root patterns occur in  
Cushitic: Som. misir, Kambatta miširā, etc., and Saho birsin,  
Kh. bissir, etc. With the marked exception of Tigre, the  
northern Ethiopian languages, Semitic and Cushitic, have the  
root in b-, which is not unlike Ar. bulsun, whilst the  
southern languages have the root in m-. The latter is  
formally closer to the probable ultimate origin of the  
root, Sanskrit masūra, which might suggest a loan directly  
from some Indian source.

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1. See Guidi, Vocabolario amarico-italiano, col. 676.

2. See Mooney, A glossary of Ethiopian plant names, Dublin  
1963, p. 12.

3. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 58; Cerulli,  
Studi etiopici I, p. 251; Leslau, An etymological dictionary  
of Harari, p. 76.

mašalla 'greater millet': Tna.Sod. mašalla, Ch. mašāra.

This is probably of Agaw origin, at least compatible forms occur there:

Bil. māselā, Khm. māylā, Kem. mayla, Quara mīlā, S.Agaw mēlā.

nug 'guizotia abyssinica': Tna. nihug ~ nōg<sup>W</sup>, Te. nōhiḡ ~ nōhōḡ<sup>W</sup>. Cushitic and specifically Agaw, perhaps: Bil. lōhōng<sup>W</sup>á, Quara lōng<sup>W</sup>a, Khm. nuwā, S.Agaw nugī, but note also Galla nugi, Saho nehúḡ.

sōnde 'wheat' : Gz. šōrnay, Tna. sōrnay, Te. šōrnay, Har. sōrri 'wheat bread', Gaf. sōndā, Ch. sōnā, etc. It has been suggested<sup>1</sup>

that this is to be derived from the common Semitic root š<sup>C</sup>r, ie. via something like šō<sup>C</sup>arnay. However, slightly better formal and semantic fits can be found throughout Cushitic, as noted by Praetorius<sup>2</sup>: Bill šinray, Galla sinra, Som. sárén, Afar sirrá, and probably even Beja serām.

This list almost certainly includes loans from Semitic Ethiopian (Bilin, for example, is the only Agaw language here; the others have a totally different item, eg. Kem. kārg<sup>W</sup>a), but it cannot be ruled out that there might be a common Hamito-Semitic item here<sup>3</sup>.

šōmbōra 'chickpea': Tna.Te. sābbāre 'type of pea - Lathyrus sativus', Har. šumbura 'chickpea', Ch. šōmbora, etc. Probably of Cushitic and specifically Galla (or Sidamo) origin: Galla šumbura, Sid. šumburā; for the N.Eth. forms cf. Saho sabbāre.

1. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae? Lipsiae 1865, col. 260.

2. Praetorius, 'Beiträge zur äthiopischen Grammatik und Etymologie', BA, I, p. 24.

3. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 280.



šānkurt 'onion' : Gz. sāg<sup>w</sup>ōrd, Tna. šāg<sup>w</sup>ōrti, Har. šānkūrta, Arg. šānkurt, Old Amh. šāng<sup>w</sup>ōrt<sup>1</sup>, etc. The item also occurs widely throughout Cushitic. Gz. sāg<sup>w</sup>ōrd and hence all the other Ethiopian forms, Semitic and Cushitic, are a loan from Gk. skórdon 'garlic'.

tālba 'flax, linseed': Gz. tālbe ~ tālbe ~ tālabe ~ tālabe. A loan from Agaw, cf. Kem. tārba, Khm. trbā, etc.

ṭef 'poa abyssinica': Tna.Te. ṭaf, Har. ṭāfi, Arg. ṭef, Ch. ṭafi, etc. Cushitic, probably Agaw, cf. Bil. ṭābā, Khm. ṭāb ~ tāb, Kem. taba, but also in Galla, ṭāfi, and Saho-Afar dāfi. The dialect Arabic forms, Datina ṭahaf ~ ṭahaf 'Myrica gale' and Hadram. ṭahaf quoted by Leslau<sup>2</sup> are perhaps merely coincidences. The plant is apparently indigenous to Ethiopia and none of the Sem.Eth. forms show any trace of a medial laryngal, even where such might be expected.

#### c) domestic animals

ahōyya 'donkey' : Tna. 'axōya beside 'adgi is possibly a loan from Amharic. This item is almost certainly of Cushitic origin, though the only apparent cognate is Saho-Afar okālo, of the same meaning.

bāg 'sheep' : Gz. bāggō<sup>c</sup>, Tna. bāggi<sup>c</sup>, Te. bōggū<sup>c</sup>, Arg. bāgi, Gaf. bāg. A similar form occurs in Agaw, cf. Bil. bāgga, Kem.

1. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 30.

2. Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 152.

bāga, Khm. bega, which Conti Rossini<sup>1</sup> regards as loans from Semitic Ethiopian. The usual Semitic terms for 'sheep', š, q'n, etc., are absent from Sem.Eth., whilst the wide distribution of the root bg<sup>c</sup> throughout Sem.Eth. in its turn might seem to suggest, if only on statistical grounds, a Semitic origin for this item, too. Indeed, it has been connected<sup>2</sup> with Ar. baḡbaḡa 'bleeting', on the one hand, and other Hamito-Semitic forms like Berber ābaḡuḡ 'kid, young sheep',<sup>3</sup> on the other. Other Sem.Eth. languages, however, use an item of clear Semitic origin: Har. ṭāy, Ch. ṭe, Sod āṭay, etc., to which Gz. ṭāli 'goat' (Sem. ṭly) may be compared.

bāklo 'mule' : Gz. bākl, Tna. bāxli, Te. bākal,  
Har. bākāl, Arg. bāklo, Gaf. bəčəlā,  
Ch. buk<sup>w</sup>rā, etc. This item is almost certainly of Cushitic origin, cf. Bil. baklā, Khm. biklā, Quara bēlā, Kem. bāyla, Saho-Afar bakela, Qabena bākulāta, Som. baqal. Arabic baḡl is a loan from Ge'ez<sup>4</sup>.

bāre 'ox' : Gz. bə<sup>c</sup>rawi ~ bə<sup>c</sup>ray ~ bə<sup>c</sup>ra, Tna.Te. bə<sup>c</sup>ray, Har. ba'ara ~ bāra, Arg.Wl. bara, Ch. bora, etc. Interestingly, all the S.Eth. forms except Amharic can be derived from the pattern bə<sup>c</sup>ra, whilst Amharic agrees with Tigre and Tigrinya in having the suffix -ay > -e. Common Semitic b<sup>c</sup>r.

dābāl 'he-goat' : Gz.Tna. dabela, Te. dibāla, Har. dābāy 'heifer'. Semitic, cf. Ar. dubl ~ dawbal 'young ass', dawbal 'suckling pig'.

1. Conti Rossini, La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, p. 175.

2. Dillmann, op.cit., col.543.

3. Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique dn chamito-sémitique, no. 390.

4. See Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 58; also Hommel, Die Namen der Säugethiere bei den südsemitischen Völkern, p. 112 ff.



- dōmmāt 'cat' : Tna.Te. dōmmu. Agaw, cf. Bil. dummū,  
Quara damyā, Kem. dami ~ damōya.
- doro 'chicken' : Gz. dorho, Tna. dārho, Te. derho,  
Arg. doro. Cushitic, perhaps  
specifically Saho-Afar dōrhō, cf.  
also Som. doro, Beja endirhō; Bil. diruwā, Kem. dirwa,  
Khm. ḡiruwā, S.Agaw dirī all point to a common Agaw form  
+ dirw-a.
- fārās 'horse' : Gz.Tna.Te. fārās, Har.Arg.Ch. fārāz,  
Arg. fārād, etc. Forms with final  
radical z or d occur throughout  
Cushitic, which has perhaps influenced the corresponding  
S.Eth. forms.<sup>1</sup> The root is ultimately common Semitic prš.
- fōyāl 'goat' : Arg. fiyel, Gaf. fōkāl. Cushitic,  
specifically S.Agaw: fileyā, also  
Dembiya fiyala; the other Agaw  
languages have a form which is almost certainly related:  
Bil. fiñtīrā, Khm. fičērā, Kem. fōntāra.
- gōlgāl 'young animal': Tna. gōlgāl 'young mule or horse',  
Arg.Gaf. gōlgāl 'lamb', Har. gīgi  
'young animal', Ch. grangōr, etc.
- A reduplication glgl of the same root as seen in Gz. 'dē<sup>w</sup>l  
'calf'. Common Semitic ḡgl (Sem.Eth. 'gl). Perhaps a similar  
reduplication occurs in Syrian Beduin Ar. gargūr 'large lamb'.<sup>2</sup>
- gōmāl 'camel' : Gz.Tna.Te. gāmāl, Har. gāmāla ~ gāmila,  
Arg. gamela, Ch. gamera, etc.  
Common Semitic gml.
- lam 'cow' : Gz. lahm, Tna. lahmi, Har.Sl. lām,  
Arg.Wl.Z. lam, Ch. āram, etc.

1. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 377.

2. ibid., no. 43.

This has been connected<sup>1</sup> with the Semitic root lhm:

Ar. lahm 'food', Heb. lehem 'bread', Soq. lehem 'shark'.

Despite the slight anomaly of the h : h correspondence

this does seem likely, but note also that Dillmann<sup>2</sup> cites an Arabic term lihm 'taurus annosus'; perhaps the Semitic root lhm (Ar. lahima 'swallow greedily') has influenced the development of the Semitic Ethiopian root in some way, too.

mānga 'flock, herd': Gaf. mānga. Praetorius<sup>3</sup> derives this

from the root nhg 'guide, conduct',

but a Cushitic derivation seems the

more likely: cf. Afar mango 'herd' from the root mag 'fill', and mang 'be numerous'.

māsina 'sterile (esp. of cattle)': Har. māsēna ~ māsīna,

Ch. māsina, Sod. māsena, etc.

From Galla masena.

sānga 'castrated animal': Tna. sanga, Har. sānga. Probably

from Galla sanga, though Praetorius<sup>4</sup>

derives this from Gz. sg<sup>wc</sup> 'stab'.

tōḡḡa 'calf' : Har. ṭīga ~ tōḡa, Arg. tōḡḡa, Gaf. sāg<sup>w</sup>ā,

Sod. ṭāg, Ch. dāk, etc. This item occurs

only in S.Ethiopian. No likely origin

can be identified. The N.Ethiopian languages use a variety of items: Gz. 'ōg<sup>w</sup>l, Te. 'ōgal, fāluy, Tna. mōrax, etc.

wōṣṣa 'dog' : Arg. wōṣṣa, Sod.Gaf. wōṣṣā. This item

is a loan from Sidamo, wōṣo, cf. also

Kambatta woṣiččú, Gudella wīṣa. The

other S.Eth. languages have various other loan items:

Har. buči, Ch. ḡoyā, Wl. bučo, etc. Only in N.Eth. is the

inherited Semitic term preserved: Gz. kālb, etc.

1. Ullendorff, 'The contribution of South Semitic to Hebrew lexicography', VT, VI, p. 192; see also Krotkoff, 'Laḥm "Fleisch" und lehem "Brot"', Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, LXII, p. 72.

2. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 25.

3. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 169.

4. ibid., p. 98.



wätäto 'kid' : Tna. wätoto. Cushitic, cf. Sid. waṭā,  
wotiččo, Galla wotiyō.

d) food and its preparation

ayb 'cheese' : Gz.Tna.Te. halib 'milk', Har. hāy,  
Arg. hayu, Sl.Wl. ayb, Ch. eb, etc.  
Common Semitic hlb<sup>1</sup>.

əngära 'bread' : Tna.Te. 'əngera, Arg. ganğir, Gaf. əngärä,  
etc. The verb gəngärä 'bake bread' has  
the same root form with initial g- as in  
the other S.Eth. nominal forms, which, according to Cohen<sup>2</sup>,  
may be the original form of the root. Praetorius<sup>3</sup> connected  
this item with Ar. cuğayr 'millet'. However, a better formal  
and semantic fit occurs in Agaw, Kem.Quara girä 'sort of  
bread'.

ənkulal 'egg' : Tna. 'ənkulalih, Arg. ənkulal, Gy. ənkura;  
another version of the root occurs in the  
other Sem.Eth. languages: Gz. 'ənkokho ~  
'ənkokho, Tna. 'ənk<sup>w</sup>ax<sup>w</sup>əho, Te. 'ənkokho, Har. akuh, Gaf. ənk<sup>w</sup>ä,  
etc. The form of the root k<sup>w</sup>lh, which lies behind Amh. ənkulal  
etc., also occurs in Amh. kula 'testicles', and has certain  
Semitic cognates: Mehri qali, Šheri qahalit, Soq. gehélihen.  
A similar root occurs throughout Cushitic, cf. Bil. kaḡalūna,  
Kem. x<sup>w</sup>ärä<sup>w</sup>ina, Som. ogaḥ, Galla ankako, etc., and is probably  
of common Hamito-Semitic origin.

ərat 'evening meal': Te. hərab 'meal', Old Amh. hərat,  
Har. hirāt, Arg. hərbad, Ch. ərbat, etc.  
The root is hrb, which also occurs in  
Amharic in the verb tarräbä 'dine'. Cohen<sup>4</sup> suggests a connexion

1. See Amh. alläbä, above, p. 133 .

2. Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 384.

3. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 169.

4. Cohen, op.cit., p. 25.

with Sem. <sup>C</sup>rb 'evening', which seems very probable.

bokka 'ferment' : Gz. bəh'a, Tna. bäx<sup>w</sup>ce, etc. The modern Sem.Eth. forms all derive from <sup>+</sup>b<sup>k</sup>(<sup>w</sup>),/<sup>c</sup> with pseudocorrection of h to k. The root is almost certainly Semitic and may be connected with Ar. nabaḥa 'be sour'.

bōrz 'honeyed water': Gz. mōzr 'beer', Tna. bōrzi 'honeyed water', Har. birzi, etc. All the modern Sem.Eth. languages have the root brz, beside Gz. mzr. Semitic, cf. Ar. mizr 'type of beer', ESA. mzr.

bāssō 'roasted barley flour': Tna. bāssō ~ bosso, Har. bāssō, Ch. bāswā, etc. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> suggested a derivation from bsl 'be cooked', but a satisfactory cognate occurs throughout E.Cushitic, cf.

Galla basso, Qabena bassūta, etc.

bāssälä 'be cooked, ripe': Gz.Tna. bāsälä, Te. bāsla, Har. bāsāla, etc. Common Semitic bāl.

čoma 'fatty meat' : so throughout modern Sem.Eth. From Galla čoma.

čāw 'salt' : Gz. šew, Tna.Arg. čāw, Gaf. čāwā, etc. From Agaw, cf. Bil. šuwā, Khm. čūwa, Kem. šōwa, Quara šiwā, etc.

dabbo 'wheat bread': Har. dābbo, Ms.Sod.Sl. dabbo, Ch. dap<sup>w</sup>a, etc. From E.Cushitic, cf. Galla dabo, Kambatta dabbūta.

doḳet 'flour' : Old Amh. dāk<sup>w</sup>et. Cf. the Sem.Eth. root dkk 'grind'. Common Semitic dqq.

dōst 'cooking pot': Tna. dōsti, Har. disti. From Ar. dist.

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 73.



fälla 'boil' : Gz. fälha, Tna. fälhe, Har. fälaḥa,  
Arg. fälläha, Sl. fäla, etc. Dillmann<sup>1</sup>  
tries to relate Sem.Eth. flh to Ar.

fwr (fāra) 'cui et saturiendi et bulliendi vis inest', but  
the formal fit is far too weak to be accepted. The shape  
of the root flh is perfectly 'respectable' Semitic, but  
because of the lack of adequate cognates it must be  
classified as 'unidentified'.

kəbe 'butter' : Gz. kəb', Tna. kəb'i ~ kəb<sup>C</sup>i, Arg. kəbi ~  
kəwi, Gaf. kəb<sup>W</sup>ä, Ch. kəb, etc. The  
root kəb' occurs throughout Semitic

Ethiopian in the sense of 'anoint, grease, butter', etc.,  
but not in the rest of Semitic in this meaning. Formally  
compatible roots occur in Heb. qb<sup>C</sup> 'fix' and Akk. qabū 'say',  
but the semantic disparity between these and the Sem.Eth.  
root militates against any reasonable correlation of the  
roots.

k<sup>W</sup>anta 'dried meat': Tna.Arg.Sod. k<sup>W</sup>anta, Har. kānta,  
Te. kānta, Gaf. kunčä 'raw meat',  
Z. k<sup>W</sup>onta 'dried fish'. A loan from  
E.Cushitic, cf. Afar k<sup>W</sup>antā, Galla kānta, Kambatta kōntā.

k<sup>W</sup>ärräsä 'break bread': Tna. k<sup>W</sup>ärräsä, Har. koräsa 'take a  
portion of s.th.'; throughout Gurage  
the root krs > kns has the meaning  
'begin'. Semitic, cf. Akk. qarāšu 'split', n. qiršu 'slice  
of bread', Heb. qereš 'plank'.

mar 'honey' : Gz.Tna.Te. mā<sup>C</sup>ar 'honeycomb, honey',  
Har. mār 'wax', Ch. mar 'beeswax', etc.  
Most of the other S.Eth. languages

preserve the common Semitic term for 'honey': Har. dūs,  
Arg. dims, Gaf. döbsä; this root occurs in epigraphic Ge'ez<sup>2</sup>

1. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 1339.

2. See Drewes, Inscriptions de l'Ethiopie antique, Leiden  
1962, p. 34, 55.

- as dbē, but is replaced in 'classical' Ge'ez by mā<sup>c</sup>ar, the original meaning of which certainly had more to do with the honeycomb than the honey itself, as shown by its Semitic cognates, Heb. ya<sup>c</sup>ar ~ ya<sup>c</sup>rā 'honeycomb'.  
mōsa 'midday meal': Gz.Tna. mōsaḥ. Common Semitic mšḥ 'anoint' (Gz. māssōḥa, Heb. māšah, etc.).  
māsob 'basket table': so, too, in Gz.Tna.Te.Arg.Wl.Z.Gaf. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> connected this with the Semitic root twb, in particular Ar. matāb 'locus in quem homines disgregati conveniunt'; note also Mod.Heb. m<sup>e</sup>sibbā 'social gathering'. One doubts whether such a concrete term as māsob could be derived from such an abstract sense as matāb, etc., though the idea is attractive and there can be little formal objection to it.  
mōtad 'griddle' : Har.Sl. mōtād, Arg.Sod.Wl.Z. mōṭad, Ch. mōdad, etc. The root of this S.Eth. item also occurs in its simple form in the Amh. verb ṭadä 'cook on a griddle'. This might be tentatively compared with Gz. ṣḥd ~ ṣ<sup>c</sup>d ('aṣḥadä 'soften, rub with oil').  
sōga 'meat' : Gz. šōga, Tna.Te. sōga. Agaw, cf. Bil. zeḡā, Khm.Quara ziyā, Kem. siya; note also Saho sagā 'cow'. The other Sem.Eth. languages preserve the common Semitic root bār: Har. bāsār, Gaf. bāsārā, etc.  
šōro 'mashed chickpeas': Tna.Sl.Wl.Z. šōro, Har. šūr, Gaf. šōrā, Ch. šōrwā, etc. A loan from Cushitic, cf. Galla šūro, Sid. šūro, etc.  
ṭābbāsā 'fry' : Gz.Tna. ṭābbāsā, Har. ṭābāsa, etc. Probably Semitic, cf. Ar. ṭbs II 'smear'.

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 159.



täǣǣ 'honey wine' : Har. täǣǣ, Ch. täǣ (a loan from Amh?),  
däǣ'ä 'honeyed water', etc. Probably  
 E.Cushitic and specifically Sidamo,  
 cf. Sid. tagge, Qabena taǣǣita; a possible cognate occurs  
 throughout the Omotic languages, cf. Šinaša dáwčō 'beer',  
 Moča dò'čō, Anfillo dawčó.

tälla 'beer' : Ch. tälla; perhaps also Tna. čölka  
 'bira di linseme', Te. sölka. The  
 N.Eth. forms are certainly loans from  
 Agaw, cf. Bil. sälaǣä, Bembiya salayä, Kem. sölaǣ, etc.  
 The Khamir item šellä comes closest to Amh. tälla and, in  
 the light of the other Agaw forms, may be a loan from Amh.  
 and not an inherited item. Nevertheless, the origin of the  
 Amharic item is probably to be sought amongst these Agaw  
 forms and their developments as they passed into Sem.Eth.

täre 'raw, fresh' : Gz.Te. täray, Tna.Sl.Wl.Z. täre,  
 Har. tiri, etc. Common Semitic try.

wätät 'milk' : possibly related are Gaf. äf<sup>w</sup>atä,  
 M. f<sup>w</sup>at, Go. äf<sup>w</sup>at, Sod. äfat. The  
 source of these and the Amharic item  
 cannot be identified. Most of the other Sem.Eth. languages  
 have forms derived from the Semitic root hľb; Tna. šäba is  
 a loan from Agaw, cf. Kem. šäb, etc.

wät 'stew' : Arg. wätəh, Har. wäti, Gaf. wäšä,  
 Ch. wät, etc. This is derived from  
 the Sem.Eth. root wšh 'pour' (Gz. 'awsəhə),  
 which may be connected with the Sem. root seen in Heb. yāšaq  
 of the same meaning.

zäyt 'oil' : Gz.Har. zäyt, Tna. zäyti, etc. Both  
 Nöldeke<sup>1</sup> and Leslau<sup>2</sup> regard this as a  
 loan, the one from Aramaic, the other  
 from Arabic. Could it not equally well be an inherited Semitic item?

1. Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 42.  
 2. Leslau, 'Arabic loanwords in Amharic', BSOAS, XIX, p. 235.

e) the house

- aṭār 'fence' : Gz. ḥasār, Tna. ḥasur, Har. ḥuṭur,  
Arg. hanṭiro, Gaf. ḥsār, etc.  
Common Semitic ḥṣr.
- bārr 'gate, door' : Tna. bārri 'passage', Te. bār 'outside',  
Har. bāri 'gate', Arg.Gaf. bār, etc.  
Semitic, cf. ESA br 'gate', Akk. barāru  
'explore'.
- bet 'house' : Gz.Tna.Te.Ch. bet, Arg. bed. Common  
Semitic byt. Several other S.Eth.  
languages use a different item, which  
is probably also of Semitic origin, cf. Har. gār (Sem. gwr).  
däḡ 'gate, entrance': Gz. dede; probably also Tna. däḡä  
by pseudocorrection of d > ḡ to g.  
Gz. dede is usually explained as being  
related to the Semitic term dl-t (Heb. delet, etc.).
- gōdḡōdda 'wall'<sup>1</sup> : Gz. gādḡād ~ gādāḡād, Tna. gīḡkidda,  
Har. gīdāḡād ~ diḡāḡad, Z. gōdḡōdda.  
Probably of Cushitic origin, cf.  
Galla gīrkida 'mud-wall, flat-roofed house', Som. gīdāḡid,  
gīdār, Kambatta gōḡḡōdda.
- gōḡo 'grass hut' : Har. gōḡḡo, Arg. gonḡo, Gaf. gōḡo, etc.  
A loan from E.Cushitic, cf. Galla, Som.,  
Sid. gōḡo.
- kāddānā 'thatch' (vb): Gz.Tna. kādānā 'cover', Te. kādna,  
Har. xādāna 'thatch', Ch. xātārām, etc.  
Throughout S.Eth. this item has been  
specialized to mean 'cover a roof with grass, thatch'.  
Semitic, cf. Akk. kadānu 'protect', Datina Ar. mukdana 'oven  
cover'.

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1. esp. a wall made of wattles and daub.



- kot 'loft' : Har. kōt, Gy.Go.Sod. k<sup>w</sup>ātā, Ch. k<sup>w</sup>ātā, etc. A loan from Sidamo, cf. Tembaro, Qabena, etc. qota.
- mōdōḡḡa 'hearth' : Arg. ōmdōḡḡa, Har. afdiḡa, Wl. midaḡḡā, Ch. mōḡača, Go. m<sup>w</sup>ōḡaḡḡa, etc. This S.Eth. item is almost certainly a noun of instrument derivation from the common Sem.Eth. root ndd 'burn', ie. <sup>+</sup>mōndō/adya > mōdōḡḡa, etc. For a discussion on the root ndd see below<sup>1</sup>.
- māndār 'village' : Ch. mādār 'place'. Praetorius<sup>2</sup> first explained this item as a nominal derivative of the root hḏr 'spend the night', ie. maḥdār (Gz. 'dwelling place'), which is almost certainly right. Nevertheless, one is intrigued to notice the large number of modern South Arabian and dialect Arabic forms with an almost identical shape **and** meanings ranging from 'village' to 'harbour': Soq. bēndher 'port', Mehri mandār, Hadrami Ar. bandar, <sup>c</sup>Omani Ar. bender, etc.<sup>3</sup>
- mōsāso 'central pole': Praetorius<sup>4</sup> derived this from a root 'ss' (ie. <sup>+</sup>mō'sās-o), to which he compared Ar. 'assasa 'found', Syr. 'āšiyātā 'column', Heb. 'āš<sup>e</sup>yā, all from Akk. asītu 'tower, pile'.

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1. p. 161.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 28.

3. See Leslau, Lexique soqotri (sudarabique moderne), Paris 1938, p. 89.

4. Praetorius, op.cit., p. 175.

### III The semantic field 'the natural environment'

The subdivisions under this heading are a) natural phenomena, b) flora, and c) fauna. In this semantic field there are necessarily items of particularly local occurrence, as well as more universal items. The names of locally restricted items, especially plant and animal names, which were perhaps new to incoming populations, could reasonably be expected to be taken into the vocabulary of the incomers from the language of the indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily always the case; an existing lexical item may have its range extended or shifted to encompass the new object. This is the case with Sem.Eth. zə'b 'hyena', the cognates of which in Asiatic Semitic languages mean 'wolf' or 'jackal'. Alternatively, existing morphs may be used to create a new form to describe a new object, as Amh. käččəne 'giraffe', Gz. 'arwe hāriś 'rhinoceros', and so on. However, the majority of names of specifically Ethiopian plants and animals is of non-Semitic origin in Amharic, whereas general terms like awre 'wild animal', wäf 'bird', kənf 'wing', känd 'horn', etc., are of inherited Semitic origin. Similarly, the names of many creatures that must already have been familiar to the incoming Semites are Semitic: ḥəb 'hyena' (but 'wolf' or 'jackal' in Asiatic Semitic), anbäsa 'lion', näbər 'leopard', əbab 'snake', nəb 'bee', zəmb 'fly', etc. This is essentially the same pattern as was discussed above in the field of the domestic environment, namely that the general terms are Semitic, but the names of many specific plants

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and animals are non-Semitic. Out of some 42 animal names studied here, 19 (approx. 45%) are of non-Semitic origin. Of these nineteen, most have cognates only in S.Ethiopian: amora 'bird of prey', azzo 'crocodile', zāhon 'elephant', kārkāro 'wild pig', kura 'crow', zāngāro 'baboon'. Those common to North and South Ethiopian, including Ge'ez, are asa 'fish', ḥāgra 'guinea fowl', sāgāno 'ostrich', and šārārit 'spider'; perhaps also kok 'partridge'. Occurring throughout modern Semitic Ethiopian, but not recorded in Ge'ez, is gumare 'hippopotamus'.

Amongst the 23 items of Semitic origin, of special interest are Amh. ayt 'mouse', ḏbab 'snake' and tāl 'worm'. The last two, ḏbab and tāl, have cognates throughout S.Ethiopian but not in N.Ethiopian, where a variety of items of different origins occur. Amh. ayt has only one Sem.Ethiopian cognate in Arg. hent, whilst a different Semitic item occurs in the rest of S.Ethiopian (Har. fu'ur ~ fūr, etc.) and N.Ethiopian employs a non-Semitic term (Gz. 'ansewa, etc.). Two terms for apparently different kinds of (wild) pig, asama and ḏrya, are both formed on inherited Semitic roots (ḥsm 'be hateful' and hrw 'dig', respectively), whilst the common Semitic term ḥ(n)zr does not occur in modern Semitic Ethiopian. This might reflect the substitution of the name of a taboo animal by a descriptive term, as in the famous case of the name of the bear in some Indo-European languages. The taboo against the pig is, of course, a well known Semitic feature<sup>1</sup>. It is just possible that the use of Cushitic terms for 'fish' throughout Semitic Ethiopian (Gz. Caša, etc., Har. tulām, etc.) and the total absence of any inherited Semitic term

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1. See Hommel, Die Namen der Säugethiere bei den südsemitischen Völkern, p. 319.

here might be due to a similar cause, the taboo in this case being a Cushitic feature.

Amongst the few specific plant names studied here<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of non-Semitic items to Semitic is greater than amongst animal names. Much of the flora of the Ethiopian highlands would perhaps be new to Semitic speakers coming from a different ecological area and consequently, as the lexicon here shows, the terms for these new plants were readily taken over from the indigenous population: exx: gōrar 'acacia', k<sup>w</sup>älk<sup>w</sup>al 'euphorbia', kārkaḥa 'bamboo', šola 'fig tree', wäyra 'olive tree'. A glance at a list of plant names common to most other Semitic languages<sup>2</sup> shows an almost complete absence of Ethiopian cognates. This is, of course, because many of the 'traditional' Semitic languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic) are in the most general terms native to a fairly consistent ecological area, characterized by such plants as the oak (Heb. 'allōn), terebinth (Ar. buṭm), willow (Ar. ḥilāf), tamerisk (Heb. 'ešēl), date palm (Ar. tamr), and so on. The only typical tree of the Ethiopian highlands with a probable Semitic name is the juniper, tōd<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, as was the case with animal names, general terms are nearly all Semitic: exx. abäba 'flower', fōre 'fruit', sar 'grass', ənčät 'wood', kōṭäl 'leaf', etc. A notable exception in Amharic is zaf 'tree', which is probably of Agaw origin. The Semitic term survives in most Semitic Ethiopian languages both in the sense of 'tree' and 'wood', but is restricted in Amharic to the latter sense (ənčät), a feature which is shared with

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1. I have dealt here only with a small number of plant names, mostly trees. This is not the place to present a detailed etymological dictionary of flora, or, indeed, anything else. Only those items that are widespread, prominent, or significant in cultural terms have been discussed.

2. See Fronzaroli, 'Studi sul lessico comune semitico, V: la natura selvatica', RANL, VIII, XXIII, p. 267-303.

3. The recently introduced and ubiquitous eucalyptus, (yä)bahōr zaf, has, of course, been excluded here.



Harari, Argobba and Gafat.

In the field of natural phenomena<sup>1</sup> the proportion of Semitic terms is slightly higher than in flora or fauna; at a conservative estimate (that is, counting only those items of safe Semitic etymology), 34 out of a total of 57 (approx. 60%) are of Semitic origin. The non-Semitic items are not of a particular semantic category, but range from items like čäräka 'moon' to wəha 'water', from čəka 'mud' to däga 'highlands', and so on. Only one of the 13 non-Semitic items here is common to all of Semitic Ethiopian, namely dämmäna 'cloud'. Common to all of S.Ethiopian only are čäräka 'moon', kän 'day', and wəha 'water', though in the case of all three the original Semitic terms do survive in parts of S.Ethiopian<sup>2</sup>. The remaining non-Semitic items are typically of restricted, local occurrence, like čəka 'mud' found in Tigrinya, Argobba, Gafat and Mäsqaṇ, or dängəya ~ dəngay 'stone' found in the same languages and in Muhər, too, or čis ~ čəs 'smoke' found in N.Ethiopian and in Amharic and Harari.

What conclusions, if any, can be drawn from the presence of non-Semitic items in the field of natural phenomena? Obviously the explanation that served for plant and animal names is not appropriate here. Items like 'moon', 'water', 'day', 'stone', etc., are the kind of vocabulary to be included amongst 'basic' items in accordance with the principles described at the beginning of this chapter<sup>3</sup>. In so far as 'basic' vocabulary tends to be more conservative than other areas of the lexicon, the occurrence of these non-Semitic items in Amharic and other Semitic Ethiopian

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1. ie. geophysical, meteorological and astronomical terms.

2. Cf. wär 'month', Har. mä'altu ~ maltu 'day' and mī 'water'.

3. See p. 102 ff .

languages could be said to reflect the degree to which non-Semitic and Semitic speaking peoples have fused in the development of the respective population groups. The majority of these non-Semitic items is of Agaw origin: tis ~ čôs 'smoke', däga 'highlands', dämmäna 'cloud', dängöya 'stone', k<sup>w</sup>älla 'lowlands' (probably), kän 'day' (probably), wäha 'water', whilst čäräka 'moon' and čoka 'mud' are more difficult to attribute to a particular Cushitic language or language group.

a) natural phenomena

afär 'soil, dust' : Har.Ch. afär, Gaf. afärä, etc. Common Semitic c<sub>pr</sub>.

aläm 'world' : Gz.Tna. Caläm. Common Semitic c<sub>lm</sub>.

amba 'flat-topped mountain': Tna. 'amba ~ 'ōmba, Gaf. amba ~ ambolağä 'mountain'. Cushitic and specifically Agaw, cf. Bil. amba, Khm. aba, S.Agaw ambe.

amäd 'ashes' : Gz.Tna.Te.Har. hamäd, Arg. hamäd, Ch. amäd, etc. Dillmann<sup>1</sup> compared Sem.Eth. hmd with two Arabic roots, hmd 'cool off, die down (of fire)' and hmd 'go out, be extinguished'.

amäday 'hoar-frost': Gz. hamäda, Tna. hamäday 'dusty atmospheric condition', Har. hamadäy 'frost', Te. handa, Gaf. ömädağ, etc.

This is almost certainly from the same Sem.Eth. root hmd as the preceding item.

amät 'year' : Gz.Tna. Camät, Har. amät, etc. Common Semitic c<sub>m</sub>.

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1. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 79.



ašāwa 'sand' : Tna. ḥašāwa; note also Gz. ḥoṣa,  
Tna.Te. ḥoṣa, Te. ḥaṣḥoṣ. The form  
of the Amharic and the first Tigrinya  
item suggests that this might be a loan from Agaw, cf.  
Quara ašawa, Dembiya ašo, Bil. qušā. On the other hand,  
the other Sem.Eth. forms are likely of inherited Semitic  
origin, cf. Heb. ḥāṣāṣ 'gravel', Ar. ḥaṣan, Akk. ḥiṣṣu, etc.  
The Agaw forms may in turn be either taken from Sem.Eth.  
ḥoṣa, etc., or may be independent reflexes of a common  
Hamito-Semitic item<sup>1</sup>.

ṭsat 'fire' : Gz.Te. 'ṭsat, Har. isāt ~ ṭsāt,  
Arg. ṭsad, Ch. ṭsat, etc. Common  
Semitic 'ṭ(-t).

bāga 'dry season' : Praetorius<sup>2</sup> derived this from +bā-ḥōga  
'im Sommer' (Gz. bā-ḥagay). Such an  
etymology is not unlikely and is, indeed,  
supported to some extent by the form of the accompanying  
verb root in Amharic, baḡḡä, where the palatalized ḡ  
indicates an original final radical y, ie. +bḡay, a  
denominative from bāḡagay. The comparison made by Leslau<sup>3</sup>  
with Har. bāyōg, M.Go. beg 'rainy season' (*sic!*) is surely  
incorrect. Rather Amh. bālg 'little rains' should be  
compared here. The root of bā-ḡagay, etc., would appear to  
be Semitic, cf. perhaps Heb. ḡag 'feast day', Syr. ḡaggā,  
and perhaps Ar. ḡiḡḡa 'year'.

bārra 'be light' : Gz.Te. bārha, Tna. bārhe, Gaf. bārä,  
Ch. bānam, etc. Several S.Ethiopian  
forms (cf. Har. bāra) presuppose a  
root form +bhr beside brh, as in the other Semitic cognates,  
Heb. bāhar, Ar. bahara.

1. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 105.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 140.

3. Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 49.

bärrädä 'be cold' : Gz. bärädä, Te. bärda, Har. bäräda, Arg. bärräda, etc; a nominal derivative (Gz. bäräd, Amh. bärädo, etc.) occurs throughout Sem.Eth. in the meaning 'hail'. Common Semitic brd.

bäräha 'desert' : Tna. bäräxa. A close formal cognate occurs in the Bilin toponym bāraḡā ~ baraḡā 'Barka' (Gz. bārka). Perhaps the proper noun has given rise to the common noun here, or vice versa.

bärräkä 'flash' (lightning): Gz. bäräkä, Tna. bäräxä; a nominal derivative (Gz. mäbräk, Tna. bärki, Arg. bōrak, etc.) in the sense of 'lightning' occurs throughout Sem.Eth. Common Semitic brq.

bar 'sea, lake' : Gz. baḥr, Tna. baḥri, Te.Har. bāhar, Ch. bar, etc. Semitic, cf. Ar. baḥr, ESA. bḥr.

čəḳə 'mud' : Tna. čəḳə, Arg.Ms. čəḳə, Gaf. čəḳä. Cohen<sup>1</sup> and Cerulli<sup>2</sup> both rightly derive this from a Cushitic source, cf. Bil. dāraq<sup>W</sup>a 'clay', Quara dax<sup>W</sup>a, Khm. roq<sup>W</sup>ä, Galla doḳke, Som. dōqo 'turbid water', etc. A different version of the same root, Som. dōbo 'mud', Sid. obbā, occurs in Har. čiba 'mud for building houses'. Leslau<sup>3</sup> suggests a connexion between this item and Har. čēḳə 'stink', Tna. šäyyäxä 'spoil'.

1. Cohen, op.cit., no. 253.

2. Cerulli, Studi etiopici I, p. 242 and Studi etiopici II, p. 184 under obbā.

3. Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 51.



- čällämä 'be dark' : Gz. šälmä, Tna. šällämä, Te. šälma,  
Har. čēläma, Arg. čelläma, Gaf. šillämä,  
etc. Common Semitic zlm.
- čäräka 'moon' : Har. čäräka 'moonlight', Arg. čäräka  
'moon', Gaf. šäräkä, Z. törka, Ch. tänäka,  
All the S.Ethiopian forms may be  
derived from <sup>+</sup>tärä/aka. The only convincing likely cognate  
is Beja terīg 'moon' and a few Sudanic items such as  
Kunama tera. Reinisch cites a Quara item zärkä 'moon', which  
looks, however, like a loan from Amharic; the usual Agaw  
term for 'moon' is <sup>+</sup>arb-a. The Semitic item, wrh, survives in  
Amharic and other S.Ethiopian languages in the sense 'month',<sup>1</sup>  
čōs 'smoke' : Gz.Tna.Te. tiš, Tna. also tiš, Har. čōs.  
Agaw, cf. Bil. tedā, Khm. tiyā,  
Kem. tōza, S.Agaw. tišā.
- dāga 'highlands' : Tna. dāga, Har. dāg 'elevated ground',  
Gaf. dāgi ~ dāg<sup>w</sup>i ~ dāga, etc.  
Cushitic, probably Agaw, cf. Bil.Quara  
dag ~ dāg 'above, up', Khm. dig; note also Galla dāga  
'escarpment'.
- dämmäna 'cloud' : Gz.Tna. dämmäna, Tna. also däbäna,  
Gaf. dämmänä, Har. dāna, Ch. däbära, etc.  
Cushitic, cf. Khm. dimenā, S.Agaw damnini.
- dängōya ~ dōngay 'stone': Tna. däng<sup>w</sup>älla 'rock', Arg. dingay,  
Gaf. dängä, M. dōng'äla, etc. Agaw,  
cf. Bil. dangurā, Khm. dugurā. The  
N.Ethiopian languages and all the S.Ethiopian languages,  
with the exception of Amharic, Argobba and Gafat, preserve  
the common Semitic item 'bn.

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1. See wär, below, p. 163.

dur 'forest' : Gz. däbr 'mountain', Tna. däbri, Te. däbär, Gaf. döbrä 'forest', Ch. döbär, End. dör, etc. Note that all the N.Eth. forms derive from the pattern däbr and mean 'mountain', whereas all the S.Eth. forms derive from <sup>+</sup>döbr and mean 'forest'. Semitic dbr, cf. Ar. dubr 'back', Heb. midbar 'desert'.

fässäsä 'flow' : Gz. fäsäsä, täfasäsä 'pour out, gush forth', Tna. fäsäsä 'flow', Ch. täfasäsän 'be spilled'. From this root are derived several nominal forms such as Amh. fäsaš 'stream', Ch. fäsäs 'rainstorm'. Semitic, cf. Heb. pāsā, pāsā 'spread out', Ar. fašā, ESA. fs 'aquae deductio'.

gum 'mist' : Ch. guna, Go. gum; note also N.Eth., Gz. gime, Tna. gimä, Te. gimat.

Praetorius<sup>1</sup> considered the Sem.Eth. forms to be a pseudocorrection from <sup>+</sup>äym, cf. Ar. äaym, äayn. This is not, of course, impossible, but in the light of Cushitic forms like Beja gim, Sid. gomiččo, Kambatta gōma, and Omotic, Wolamo gumä, it seems likely that we are dealing with a Hamito-Semitic item<sup>2</sup>, the Cushitic reflexes of which have almost certainly influenced the S.Ethiopian forms, at least.

ä<sup>ww</sup>ärf 'flood' : Arg.Sod. ä<sup>w</sup>ärf. Semitic, cf. Heb. ä<sup>w</sup>ärap 'sweep away, clean'.

kokäb 'star' : Gz.Te.Arg.Sod.Z. kokäb, Tna. koxob, Gaf. kokobä, Ch. x<sup>w</sup>äx<sup>w</sup>äb, etc.  
Common Semitic kbkb > kwkb.

1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 67.

2. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, no. 219.



kōrāmt 'rainy season': Gz. kōrāmt, Tna. kōrāmti, Te. kārām,  
Har. kirmi, Arg. krāmt, Ch. xōrām  
'year', etc. Note that Amharic and

Argobba alone of the S.Eth. languages share the pattern  
with suffixed -t with N.Ethiopian; other S.Eth. forms can  
all be derived from the patterns <sup>+</sup>kōrm, <sup>+</sup>kārm, or <sup>+</sup>kārām.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. karuma 'rain; be generous'.

k<sup>w</sup>ālla 'lowlands': Tna. k<sup>w</sup>ālla, Te. kālākkōl, Gaf. k<sup>w</sup>āla.  
Guidi<sup>1</sup> related this to the verb root  
k<sup>w</sup>la 'roast', but one might also  
compare the Agaw terms for 'river, valley': Bil. q<sup>w</sup>alā,  
Khm. aquāl, Quara kūrā, Kem. k<sup>w</sup>ōra.

kān 'day': Arg. kāna, Gaf.Sod. kānā, Ch. kārā,  
Enn. kārā, etc. Praetorius<sup>2</sup> derived  
this from the Sem.Eth. root kn<sup>c</sup>

'be straight', ie. 'Hochstehen der Sonne'. However, the  
Agaw items for 'sun': Bil.Quara kūārā, Khm. kūārā,  
Kem. k<sup>w</sup>ara, might tentatively be compared. N.Ethiopian  
and the other S.Ethiopian languages preserve an item of  
Semitic origin: Gz. mā<sup>c</sup>alt (/w<sup>c</sup>l)<sup>3</sup>.

let 'night': Gz. lelit, Tna. läyti, Te. lali,  
Har. läyli ~ lēli, Gaf. litä.  
Common Semitic lyl(-t).

meda 'plain': Praetorius<sup>4</sup> derived this from <sup>+</sup>māheda  
'Ort wo man geht' (/hEd), citing an  
Argobba form hed with the same meaning.

This Argobba form does not appear to be recorded elsewhere.  
On the other hand, one notices the formal resemblance between  
meda and the Harari term mēdān also meaning 'plain', which  
is, however, a loan from Ar. maydān 'square, open place'.

1. Guidi, Vocabolario amarico-italiano, col. 234.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 142.

3. Amharic also uses ōlāt 'day', from Gz. cōlāt, and derived  
from the same Semitic root.

4. Praetorius, op.cit., p. 26.

- məddər 'earth' : Gz. məddər, Tna. mədri. Semitic, cf. ESA. mdr, Akk. midru, Aram. medrā 'clod, turf'.
- mokä 'be warm, hot': Gz. mokä, Tna. moxä, Te. moka, Har. mōka, Ch. m<sup>w</sup>ākām, etc. Dillmann<sup>1</sup> tried to related common Sem.Eth. mwk to several Arabic roots, w<sup>c</sup>ck 'vehemens fuit calor', 'kk and c<sup>c</sup>kk 'fervidus fuit dies'. These Arabic items are plainly formally remote from the Semitic Ethiopian root. It is not, of course, impossible that mwk and w<sup>c</sup>ck are ultimately developments of the same primitive root, but as it is not possible to relate them with any degree of certainty, the Ethiopian item must remain 'unidentified'.
- mənč 'spring' : Gz. mänkə<sup>c</sup>, Tna. mənči<sup>2</sup>, Arg. mənč, Gaf. mənčä. The root is nk<sup>c</sup> (Gz. nāk<sup>c</sup>a 'burst'), to which Ar. naqa<sup>c</sup>a 'pour out' may be compared.
- mäsšä 'become evening': Gz. mäsyä, Tna. mäsäyä, Te. mäsa, Har. mäša, etc. Many Sem.Eth. languages also have a nominal form (Gz. məset, Amh. məšät, Arg. mušed, etc.) in the sense of 'evening'. Common Semitic, cf. Ar. masā', Akk. mūšu 'night'.
- mata 'evening' : Gaf. məbet. Leslau<sup>3</sup> derives this from the root byt (Gz. betä 'pass the night'). Praetorius<sup>4</sup>, unaware of the Gafat item, suggested a derivation from the root 'tw 'return'. In the light of the Gafat item the former of these two etymologies seems the more likely: <sup>+</sup>məbeta > mata.

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1. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 202.

2. A loan from Amharic, as the form shows.

3. Leslau, Gafat documents, New Haven 1945, p. 161.

4. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 159; see also Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 413.



nāddädä 'burn' : Gz. nāddä ~ nädädä, Tna. nädädä,  
Te. nādda, Har. nädäda, etc. Some  
other Sem.Eth. languages employ a  
root related to Amh. täḳattälä (Tna. täxasälä, Arg. ḳḳattäla,  
Gaf. täḳattälä, etc.). Both roots, ndd and ḳṣl, are  
perfectly in accord with Semitic root patterns, but no  
cognates can be found outside Semitic Ethiopian.

nāfas ~ nōfas 'wind': Gz. nāfas, Tna. nāfas ~ nōfas,  
Arg.Gaf. nōfas, Ch. ḳmfas, etc.  
Common Semitic npš<sup>1</sup>.

nāḡḡa (vb) 'dawn' : Gz. nāḡḡa, Tna. nāḡḡe. The nominal  
derivative occurs widely throughout  
Sem.Eth: Gz. nāḡḡ 'dawn, morning',  
Amh. nāḡä, nāḡ 'tomorrow', Gaf.Arg. nāḡ, Ch. nāḡä; also  
Gz. nōḡḡat 'dawn', Amh. nōḡat, Tna. nōḡaho, and perhaps  
Ch. ḡat. Common Semitic nḡḡ.

rāḡḡa 'freeze, congeal': Gz. rāḡ<sup>c</sup>a, Tna. rāḡ'e, Te. rāḡ'a,  
Har. rāḡa'a, Ch. nākam, etc. Semitic,  
cf. Heb. rāḡa<sup>c</sup> 'be benumbed, congealed'.

sāmay 'sky' : Gz.Tna.Gaf. sāmay, Te. sāma', Arg.Har.  
sāmi, Ch. sāme. Common Semitic šmy.  
The Tigre item looks more like a  
loan from Ar. samā' than an inherited Sem.Eth. item.

tārara 'mountain' : There appear to be no formal cognates  
of this item in the rest of Sem.Eth.,  
where a variety of forms occur, most  
probably of non-Semitic origin: Gz. däbr (cf. dur, above),  
Tna. 'ḳmba (cf. amba, above), Har. sāri, Gaf. ṣiḡḡä,  
Ch. ḳ<sup>w</sup>äto, Arg. ḡubba, etc. One wonders whether Amh. tārara  
might be connected with Semitic tll, cf. Ar. tall 'hill',  
Aram. t<sup>e</sup>līlā 'high', Heb. teḷ, tālūl, Akk. tillu.

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1. See nāfs, above, p.125 .

täbba (vb) 'dawn' : Gz. ṣäbha, Tna. ṣäbhe, Gaf. ṣäbbä.

The nominal derivative also occurs

throughout Sem.Eth: Gz. ṣəbāh,

Amh. ṭwat, Arg. ṭəwwah, Z. ṭəbbə, etc. Common Semitic ṣbh.

tāl ~ təl 'dew' : Gz. täll, Gaf. aṣəl, etc. Semitic,

cf. Heb. tal.

təla 'shade, shadow': Gz. ṣəlalot, Tna.Te. ṣəlal, Har.

čāya, Arg. təla, Gaf. čəlayä, Ch. tərar,

etc. The Sem.Eth. root is ṣll, of which

the final radical l is lost in Amharic and Argobba perhaps through palatalization, l > y >  $\emptyset$ . Common Semitic zll.

tay 'sun' : Gz. zähay, Tna. ṣähay, Arg. čəhed,

Gy. čäyät, Ch. čet, etc. Amharic is

the only S.Eth. language with the

root form, as in N.Ethiopian; the other S.Eth. forms all

have a -t suffix. Several S.Eth. languages use different

roots, cf. Gaf. aymərä, Sod. yimər (cf. Gz. 'amir),

Har. īr, Sl.Wl. ayr, Z. arīt, Go. aret (cf. Gz. 'er<sup>1</sup>).

Sem.Eth. zhy is Semitic, cf. Ar. duḥa<sup>n</sup> 'forenoon', ḍahwa, ḍahiya.

wəha 'water' : Arg. āh<sup>w</sup>a, Gaf. ägä, Ch. əxa, End. əhə,

Sod. igä, etc. The Amharic form may

represent a metathesis of \*əh<sup>w</sup>a.

Agaw, cf. Bil. cawq, Khm. awq, Kem. ax<sup>w</sup>; note also

Sid. wāhō ~ wuhō, Kambatta wo'ō, which could be the direct

source of the Amharic item, unless the metathesis described above is admitted; the Sidamo forms may also have influenced

the Amharic item. The N.Ethiopian languages and a few

S.Ethiopian ones preserve the Semitic term: Gz.Tna.Te. may,

Har. mī ~ mīy, Sl.Wl. mäy, Z. may.

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1. See Plazikowsky-Brauner, Ein Äthiopisch-amharisches Glossar (Sawäsew), Berlin 1913, p. 10.



- wānz 'river' : Gz.Tna.Te. wāhiz 'stream'. "The root pattern behind the Amharic item must be <sup>+</sup>wāhaz, or <sup>+</sup>wahəz, in order to result in <sup>+</sup>waz > wānz<sup>1</sup>. The Eth. root whz is almost certainly Semitic and connected with the Eth. root wz<sup>c</sup> 'sweat'<sup>2</sup>.
- wār 'month' : Gz. wārḥ 'moon, month', Tna. wārḥi, Te. wārəḥ, Har. wārḥi ~ wāhri 'month', Sod. wārā, etc. Common Semitic wrḥ.
- wašša 'cave' : Gaf. waššā, Arg.Sod. wašša, etc. Perhaps Agaw, cf. S.Agaw waši, Quara waša, but note also Gudella wāšša.
- zānnābā 'rain' : Gz. zānmā, Tna. zānāmā ~ zānābā, Te. zālma, Har. zālāma, Ch. zānābām, etc. The nominal derivative also occurs widely throughout Sem.Eth: Gz. zōnam, Tna. zōnam ~ zōnab, Amh. zōnam ~ zōnab, Te. zōlam, Har. zōnāb, Ch. zōrab, etc. Common Semitic, cf. ESA. dnm, Heb. zerem, Aram. zarmit.

#### b) flora

- abāba 'flower' : Tna. Cāmbaba, Te. Cāmboba, Gaf.Arg. abāba, Z. ambābā, etc. Common Semitic, cf. Heb. 'ābīb 'ripening ears of grain, harvest time', 'ēb 'bud', Jewish Aram. 'ibbā ~ 'inbā 'fruit', Akk. inbu 'bud'.
- arāg 'climbing plant, vine': Gz. ḥarāg 'vine', Tna.Har. ḥarāg 'climbing plant'. One wonders whether this Eth. root ḥrg might be connected with Ar. ḥrġ, Heb. ḥrg 'come out, spring up', or with Eth. crg 'climb'.

1. See Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 28.

2. See wāzza, above, p.128.

ənčāt 'wood' : Gz. Cəz 'tree, wood', Tna. Cənsäyti ~ Cənčäyti, Te. Cəčäy, Har. inči 'wood', Arg. inčed, Gaf. ənčä, etc. Common

Semitic C<sub>d</sub>.

əšoh ~ šoh 'thorn': Gz. šok, Tna. 'əšox, Te. šokät, Har. usux, Arg. əšoh, Ch. sox, etc. Common Semitic swk.

färe 'fruit' : Gz.Tna.Te.Arg. färe, Har. färi, etc. Common Semitic pry.

gənd 'log, trunk' : Gz. ḡ<sup>w</sup>ənd, Tna. ḡ<sup>w</sup>əndi, Te. gənday, Ch. gənd, etc. Dillmann<sup>1</sup> related this to the Eth. root gmd 'cut, cut off',

citing Ar. ḡmd 'be solid, hard' as a closer semantic cognate. There is, however, a regular qətl pattern nominal derivative from this root in Ge'ez: gəmd 'pars abscissa, segmentum'. Of course, ḡ<sup>w</sup>ənd could ultimately be from the same root, but with medial m > n conditioned by the close juncture with d regularized and levelled in other forms, such as the participle pattern ḡ<sup>w</sup>ənnud.

gərar 'acacia' : Ch. gərar, Ulbarag gərarən. Perhaps from Som. gälöl, or a form similar to it.

koso 'anthelmintic plant': Tna.Te. koso. Perhaps from an Omotic source, cf. Šinaša kosbo, Moča hə'šo, Kāffa kašó.

k<sup>w</sup>älk<sup>w</sup>al ~ k<sup>w</sup>əlk<sup>w</sup>al 'euphorbia': Tna. k<sup>w</sup>älk<sup>w</sup>al, Te. kələnkäl, Go. kulkwāl, etc. Agaw, cf. Bil. qūelanqūālā, Kem. qūolqūālā ~

qūoqūālā.

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1. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 1180.



kārkaḥa ~ kōrkāḥa ~ kōrhaha 'bamboo': Tna. karkah,  
Har. kārkaḥa. Agaw, cf. S. Agaw qerqāgi,  
Kem. krixaxa.

kōṭāl 'leaf' : Gz. k<sup>w</sup>āsl, Tna. k<sup>w</sup>āslī, Har. kuṭṭī,  
Arg. kōṭal, Ch. kōṭār, etc. Semitic,  
cf. Ar. qaṣala 'mow', qaṣīl 'orge vert  
qu'on donne aux chevaux',<sup>1</sup>.

lāmlām 'green, fertile': Gz. Tna. lāmlām, Gaf. lāmlām<sup>w</sup>ä.

The Eth. root lm is probably to be  
connected with lm<sup>c</sup> 'prosper', lmh  
idem., and at the same time to hml 'grow green'. These all  
appear to be extensions and developments of the Semitic  
root also seen in Ar. lamaḥa 'flash, sparkle' and haml  
'fructus arboris'.

lōṭ 'bark' : Gz. lōḥṣ, Tna. lōḥṣī, Te. lōḥōṣ,  
South Arg. lihinto. Semitic, cf.  
Ar. lahḥaṣa 'squeeze', Heb. lāḥaṣ.

sar 'grass' : Gz. śa<sup>c</sup>r, Tna. sa<sup>c</sup>ri, Te. sā<sup>c</sup>ar,  
Har. sā'ar ~ sār, Arg. sīr, Ch. sār,  
etc. Common Semitic ś<sup>c</sup>r.

sōr 'root' : (see under sōr 'nerve'<sup>2</sup>).

šola 'fig tree' : Har. sōbla, Arg. šola, Sod. sobla,  
Ch. šābra, etc; probably also to be  
compared here are Gz. Tna. Te. sāgla;

origin unidentified.

tōd 'juniper' : Gz. ṣōḥd ~ sōḥd, Tna. ṣōḥdi, Gaf. čōdä,  
Z. tōda, Ch. dāt, etc. Probably  
Semitic, cf. Ar. ṣu<sup>c</sup>d 'height'<sup>3</sup>.

1. See Dozy, Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes, Vol. 2,  
Leyde 1881, p. 360.

2. See p. 125.

3. See Leslau, Etude descriptive et comparative du Gafat,  
Paris 1956, p. 192.

wäyra ~ wera 'olive': Te. wägre, Har.Sl.Wl.Z. wägär,

Ch. wagra, etc. Cushitic, cf.

Bil. wağarā, Kem. wäyra, S.Agaw weri,

Hadiya wērā, Som. wāgar. The development g > y is a particularly Agaw phenomenon<sup>1</sup> and its presence in the Amharic item vis-à-vis Tigre, Harari, etc., suggests particular Agaw influence in the development of the Amharic item. On the other hand, Harari and E.Gurage wägär looks as if it has been directly influenced by Somali wāgar.

zaf 'tree'

: Har. zāf 'large tree', Arg. zaf,

Gaf. zaf<sup>Wä</sup>. Agaw, cf. Kem. zaf,

Khm. zāf, Quara ḡāfā.

#### c) fauna

aläkt ~ alōkt<sup>2</sup> 'leech': Gz. Caläkt, Tna. Caläxti,

Te. Caläk, Har. ēkti, Ch. aräköṭ, etc.

Semitic Clq-t.

amora 'bird of prey': Tna. 'amora, Arg. amora, Ch. amāra,

Z. amara, etc. Unidentified.

anbäsa 'lion'

: Gz. Canbäsa ~ 'anbäsa, Tna. 'anbäsa,

South Arg. hambassa. Semitic,

cf. Ar. Canbas ~ Cabbas. The other

Sem.Eth. languages use a variety of forms: Te. ḥayät,

Har. wänäg, Gaf. zibbä, Ch. ḡäp, etc.

anbäṭa 'locust'

: Gz.Tna. 'anbäṭa, Te. Cambäṭa, Gaf,

anbät, Arg. anbäṭa. This is probably

derived from the Semitic root nbṭ

'come out, emanate'.

1. See Reinisch, Die Chamirsprache in Abessinien, Vol.1, Wien 1884, p. 36.

2. Shoan Amharic alḡöṭ.



- asa 'fish' : Gz. Caśa, Tna.Te. Casa, Gaf. asä, Arg.Ch. asa, etc. Agaw, cf. Bil. Cazā, Kem. asa, S.Agaw asi; but note also Saho Cāsa and Beja aśa.
- asama 'pig' : Tna. ḥasāma, Te. ḥasama. This item is probably to be related to the Eth. root ḥsm (Gz. ḥasāmā 'be hateful, bad; displease'), to which Ar. ḥasīma 'be angry', ḥasāma 'say unpleasant things' may be compared. The pig is, of course, a taboo animal in traditional Ethiopian culture, as amongst other Semitic speaking peoples.
- awre 'wild animal': Gz. 'arwe, Tna. 'arawit<sup>1</sup>, Te. 'arwe 'snake', Gaf.Arg. awre, Har. ūri, etc. From the same root derives Amh. awra 'male (animal), chief, main'. Common Semitic 'rw(-y). The same item, 'arwe, etc., also occurs in the compound noun Amh. awraris 'rhinoceros' (Gz. 'arwe ḥariś, lit. 'rough-skinned beast'), recorded by Cosmas as arisi.
- ayt 'mouse' : Arg. hent, Old Amh. hays. Semitic, cf. Akk. aiasu 'weasel'. The N.Eth. languages use an item of Agaw origin: Gz. 'ansewa, etc., whilst the rest of S.Eth. has an item of different Semitic origin: Har. fu'ur ~ fūr, etc.
- azzo 'crocodile' : M.Ms.Go. azzo, Old Amh. hazzo, etc; note also Har. ḥās. Cushitic and probably Agaw, cf. Kem. azo, S.Agaw azzu; Har. ḥās is probably from a different source, cf. Som. yahās.
- ḥbab 'snake' : Arg. ḥḥwaw ~ howaw, Har. ḥubāb, Gaf. ḥbab<sup>Wä</sup>, Wl. ḥmbab, Old Amh. ḥḥbab,

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1. Formally a plural, cf. Gz. 'arawit.

Nöldeke<sup>1</sup> regarded this as derived from the root hbb 'love' as an instance of Gegensinn. However, the root hbb occurs in Tigre with the meaning 'wind, curve'; cf. also Ar. hubāb 'serpent'.

əffuñit 'viper' : Har. ħiffiñ, Sl. əffəñña, Wl. umfäññet, Z. umfiññi. One wonders whether this S.Ethiopian item might be related to the N.Ethiopian and common Semitic root 'p<sup>c</sup>-t' of the same meaning.

ənḵurarit 'frog' : Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ärnänä<sup>c</sup>at ~ k<sup>w</sup>ärnanä<sup>c</sup>at ~ k<sup>w</sup>ärnäna<sup>c</sup>at, Tna. k<sup>w</sup>ər<sup>c</sup>o ~ k<sup>w</sup>ər<sup>c</sup>ob ~ 'ənk<sup>w</sup>ər<sup>c</sup>ob, Te. korä<sup>c</sup> ~ 'ənkörä<sup>c</sup>,

Har. anḵurāraḥti, Sl.Wl.Z. ənḵurarit. All these forms are ultimately various extensions and reduplications of a root +k<sup>w</sup>r<sup>c</sup> ~ k<sup>w</sup>rh. Although this appears to be partly onomatopoeic, one can compare similar forms from elsewhere in Semitic: cf. Ar. qurra ~ qirra ~ qarra, Talmudic Heb. qūrquūr 'the croaking of frogs'<sup>2</sup>.

ənšəlalit 'lizard': Ch. ənšənet ~ ənšərənät, E. ənšərənnät; maybe also Har. ašhiyya ~ ašhiya, Z. asiyya, End. ušəññä, etc. The most interesting point to be made here is the wide occurrence of the pattern ən+C<sub>1</sub>əC<sub>2</sub>aC<sub>2</sub>+it here and in other animal names, like ənḵurarit 'frog', or Arg. ənšərarit 'spider' (Amh. šärärit), or perhaps also Wl. umfäññet 'viper' (Amh. əffuñit).

ərgəb 'dove' : Gz. rəgb, Tna. rəgbi, Te. rəgəb, Har. erḡib. Semitic, cf. Akk. riḡab/pu.

1. Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 89.

2. See Cohen, Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, np. 126.



ōrya 'pig' : Gz. ḥarāwya ~ ḥarawya, Te. ḥarawya,  
Har. ḥariyya, Sl. irāya, Old Amh. hōrya.

The S.Eth. forms may be derived from

<sup>+</sup>ḥa/ōrōwya > <sup>+</sup>ḥa/ōrōyya, with -wy- > -yy-. The root appears  
to be hrw ~ ḥrw (Gz. ḥarāwā 'dig'). Common Semitic, cf.

Ar. ḥāra, Heb. ḥār.

bārrārā (vb) 'fly': Gz. bārrā, Tna. bārārā, Te. bārra,

Har. bārāra, Ch. bānārām, etc.

The Sem.Eth. root brr is cognate with

pr in the rest of Semitic.

čolat 'hawk' : Har. ṭilli, Z. čululle. Cushitic,  
cf. Kambatta ṭillilličūta, Qabena ṭililūta,  
Sid. čululle, Galla čululle; note also

Kem. tālāy, which might, however, be an old loan from Amharic.

dakōyye 'duck' : Har. dākiya, Ms. dakkiyā, etc.

From Galla, dakiya.

fālfāl ~ fālfāl 'mole': Arg. fālfāl, Har. fīfi, Gaf. fālfālā,  
etc. Probably from the root flf

(Gz. fālfālā 'gush forth', Amh. fālāffālā

dehusk, bite (of insects)'), to which Semitic pl may be  
compared, cf. Ar. falla 'break', Heb. pālal 'cut, rend', and  
especially ESA flt (n) 'ditch, excavation'. Interestingly,  
the item fālfāl occurs in Ge'ez with the meaning 'elephant'.  
This is probably to be connected with Semitic pīl-, etc.

gumare 'hippopotamus': Tna. gumare, Te. gumare 'rhinoceros',

Har. gumārre 'hippopotamus', Ch. gomana,  
etc. Cushitic, cf. Afar gūmārī,

Kem.Quara gumārī, Khm. gumāri, Som. ḡēr.

goš 'buffalo' : Har. gōš, Arg. goš, Ch. gāš, Sl. gāšo,  
etc. Exact formal cognates for this item  
occur in Cushitic, cf. Sid. gōše,

Khm. guša, etc., but it is hard not to associate the Sem.Eth.  
item with Gz. gamus of the same meaning, which is a loan  
through Ar. ḡamūs from Persian ḡavmīš, ḡamīš, ḡamūš.

- ġəb 'hyena' : Gz. zə'b, Tna. zə'bi, South Arg. ġu.  
Common Semitic d'b 'wolf, jackal'.  
The other Sem.Eth. languages have  
a variety of terms, probably of non-Semitic origin:  
Te. kəray, Har. wārāba, Gaf. kərčämä, Ch. ḡänčä, etc.  
ġəra 'guinea fowl': Gz. zəra, Tna. zəra, Har. zira -  
zikra, etc. Cushitic, cf. Bil. ḡəgrīnā,  
Kem. ḡirānā, S.Agaw zəgrānā,  
Alaba ḡirāta, Saho zagrā, Som. digirin.  
ġərat 'tail' : probably to be related to the item  
čəra 'fly-whisk' - in Tna.Arg.Gaf.  
čəra has the meaning 'tail', but  
elsewhere 'fly-whisk', as in Amharic. Both items are of  
Cushitic origin, but ġərat is probably from a different  
source within Cushitic to čəra: cf. Kem. ḡərāy ~ ḡərāy,  
Khm. ḡerā, but S.Agaw čəri, Galla čira, Qabena čirā.  
The Semitic term for tail, dnb, occurs in N.Eth: Gz.Te.  
and Ḥamasen Tna. zənəb.  
kənf 'wing' : Gz. kənf, Tna. kənfi, Ch. kənfä, etc.  
Common Semitic knp.  
kərkərrə 'wild pig': Har. karkarro, Arg. karkaro,  
Gaf. kərkär. Cushitic, cf. Galla,  
Som. karkaro.  
koḵ 'partridge' : Tna. koḵah, Arg.Ch. koḵ, Gaf. kuḵ<sup>w</sup>aḵḵi,  
Sod. kuḵä, etc. The item is also  
recorded in Ge'ez as koḵah, but it is  
not sure to what extent this is an original Ge'ez item or  
an introduction from some vernacular language. Cushitic,  
cf. Kem. kawḍya, Khm. qoqaya, Qabena koḵä.
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- kəmal 'louse' : Gz.Tna. k<sup>w</sup>əmal, Te. kəməl, Har. kumāy,  
Arg. kəmal, Ch. kəmar, etc. Common  
Semitic qml ~ qlm.
- kunəčča 'flea' : Gz. k<sup>w</sup>ənṣ, Tna. k<sup>w</sup>ənṣi, Te. kaṣ ~ käs,  
Har. kunāč, Arg. kunəčča, Ch. kərač,  
etc. The root is Eth. k<sup>w</sup>ns ~ kns  
(Gz. känäsä, kännäsä 'leap, jump'). Semitic, cf. Ar. qamaṣa.  
The medial radical n of Sem.Ethiopian vis-à-vis Arabic m  
could have arisen through assimilation to the following ṣ  
in some such environment as +gumṣ > k<sup>w</sup>ənṣ.
- känd 'horn' : Gz. kärn, Tna. kärni, Te. kär (pl. 'akərnät),  
Har. kär, Arg. känd, Ch. kän, etc.  
Common Semitic qrn.
- kura 'crow' : Arg. kura, Gaf. kurä, Har. kurra,  
Ch. k<sup>w</sup>ürä, etc. Praetorius tried to  
derive this from Sem.ʾrb<sup>1</sup>. There are,  
however, widespread Cushitic items with better formal fit:  
Bil. kūā-qūrá, Kem. xoräy, Quara qura, Alaba kura, Tembaro  
kūra. It is possible, of course, that some of these Cushitic  
items are taken from Semitic Ethiopian.
- nəb 'bee' : Gz. nəhb, Tna. nəhbi, Te. nəhəb,  
Arg.Ch. nəb, Gaf. nəb<sup>w</sup>ä, etc.  
Other Semitic languages have the root  
nüb-; perhaps the medial h in Sem.Eth. can be explained as  
due to contamination with a root nhb (Ar. nahaba 'plunder,  
move rapidly', also occurring in ESA.).
- näbər 'leopard' : Gz. nämr, Tna. näbri, Ch. näbər, etc.  
Common Semitic nmr.
- sägon 'ostrich' : Gz. sägäno, Tna.Te. sägän. Agaw, cf.  
Bil. sägan, Khm. sagünä, Quara saganä.

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1. See Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 67; see also  
Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 93.

sāk<sup>w</sup>āna 'animal leg': Gz. sāk<sup>w</sup>āna 'heel, horse's hoof',

Tna. sāx<sup>w</sup>āna, Har. sāxana 'shin',

Ch. sanxara, etc. Cushitic, cf.

Bil. za<sup>w</sup>ana, Quara sukanā, Afar. dək<sup>w</sup>a<sup>c</sup>ōnō, Beja sək<sup>w</sup>ena.

šārārit 'spider' : Gz. šaret, Tna.Te. saret, Arg. ənšārarit,

Har. ašširāraḥti, Sod. šārayit,

Ch. šet, etc. The underlying root of

all the Sem.Eth. forms may be reconstructed as <sup>+</sup>šr(y),

with reduplication in Amh.Arg.Har.Sod.Go.Wl.Enn. to srr(y).

Cerulli<sup>1</sup> derives this from Cushitic: 'la voce significa

in cuscitico 'colui che veste' (probabilmente anche 'il

tessitore')'. Similar forms occur throughout Cushitic,

cf. Bil. sariro, Kem. sāri, Galla sarariti, Saho sarō-

bāhaytā 'il portatore di veste'; the Cushitic root appears

in its simple form in Bil. sar-, Kem. sāy- 'wear'.

šut 'tapeworm' : Har. suṭi, Sod. sočā, Ch. sončā,

Wl. seṭo 'anthelmintic', etc.

Probably of E.Cushitic origin: cf.

Hadiya sūto, Darasa hētō, Galla heṭo.

təh<sup>w</sup>an 'bed bug' : Tna. təx<sup>w</sup>an, Te. təkan, Har. tuxān,

Arg. tuhan, Ch. təxar, etc. Cushitic,

cf. Bil. tə<sup>w</sup>ana, Saho tik<sup>w</sup>an,

Galla tukana.

təl 'worm' : Har. tulu', Arg. tuli', Sod. təlā,

Z. tul, Ch. čərā, etc. Common Semitic

t(w)l<sup>c</sup>-t.

toṭa 'Vervet monkey': Cushitic and specifically Agaw,

cf. Khm. čičuwā, Kem. šəšāwa.

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1. Cerulli, Studi etiopici I, p. 237.



wäf 'bird' : Gz.Tna.Te. Cof, Har. ūf, Arg. wof,  
Gaf. yōf<sup>w</sup>ä, Ch. äf, etc. Common  
Semitic Cwp.

wala 'sp. of mountain antelope': Gz. wə<sup>c</sup>la ~ wä<sup>c</sup>ala,  
etc. Common Semitic w<sup>c</sup>l 'mountain  
goat'.

zāhon ~ zohon 'elephant': Arg.Sod. zāhon, M. zāxonä,  
Ch. zäx<sup>w</sup>ärä, etc; in Harari, Səlṭi  
and Wäläne the item occurs with

initial d- instead of z-, cf. Har. doxon. Cushitic, cf.  
Saho dakano, Som. daḡon, Bil.Kem.Quara ḡana, Sid. daniččō.  
Cerulli<sup>1</sup> reconstructs the 'common Cushitic' item as  
+zak<sup>w</sup>an-, a form very close to and perhaps even influenced  
in its reconstruction by +zäk<sup>w</sup>än, from which all the  
Sem.Eth. forms in z- can be derived. It is not, however,  
clear to which Cushitic language or language group this  
form should be attributed. Certainly, it would seem  
reasonable to attribute the Harari and related forms to  
a different Cushitic source, perhaps Somali, or Saho?  
The N.Ethiopian languages all use a form ḡarmaz, and Ge'ez  
has a further form, näḡe, seemingly of Indian origin.

zōmb 'fly' : Tna.Har. zōmbi, Gaf. zōmbä, Arg. zōmb,  
etc. Common Semitic dbb. Ge'ez does  
not preserve this Semitic item, but

has a form ṣōnṣōnya, which also appears in Tna. as ṣōnṣōya  
and Te. as čōnčay; it is of Agaw origin, cf. Kem. šinša, etc.

zōnḡäro 'baboon' : Har. zāḡäru, Gaf. ḡōnḡörä, Sl. zānḡero,  
etc. Agaw, cf. Bil. ḡoggūrā, Quara ḡagirā,  
Kem. ḡägōra, S.Agaw zagri; note also  
Som. dāyer ~ dañer ~ danḡer, Hadiya dagierä.

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1. Cerulli, Studi etiopici II, p. 198.

#### IV The semantic field 'social organization'

The subdivisions under this heading are a) law and government, b) economy, c) warfare, and d) religion. The areas of the lexicon covering culturally sensitive categories like social organization, economy, religion, etc., are - as might be expected - more fluid in turn-over, in acceptance of loan elements and influences, than some of the other semantic fields discussed so far. Moreover, perhaps in this field more than in any other, can extra-linguistic conclusions about history, ethnic contacts, and patterns of cultural influence of the speakers of the language be drawn. Thus, when we examine vocabulary from the sphere of trade and economy in Amharic, we find a large number of items taken from Arabic or from elsewhere through the medium of Arabic. The traditional role of outsiders, particularly the Arabs, in the commerce of Ethiopia is, of course, well known. Amongst these commercial terms we may include hisab 'account', bēlaš 'gratis, free', ʿumruk 'customs', ḡorš ~ kḡrš 'small coin', kḡray 'rent', māskin 'poor', mizan 'scales', suk 'small shop', wāket 'ounce', and so on. Similarly, a number of military terms is of Arabic origin, including items like ḡorade 'scimitar', sāllāfā 'draw up in battle line', harb 'army' and its Amharic extension arbāñña 'warrior', as well as the names of products of more recent military technology like māḡḡf 'cannon', tāmāñña 'rifle', nāft 'rifle', etc. On the other hand, most traditional military titles in Amharic appear to be indigenous, the only exception being baša, taken from Arabic, though ultimately of Turkish origin,

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as is tāmānka, cited above. The intermediary here is the Turkish occupation of Massawa.

The contribution of the non-Semitic languages of Ethiopia in these fields is much smaller. In economy there is amole 'salt bar currency', doha 'poor'<sup>1</sup>; in military terminology, gašša 'shield', lole 'soldier' (also meaning 'servant', cf. aškār (of Arabic origin) with the same range of meaning in Amharic), and more specific terms like yābbo 'short spear', agre 'large shield', and dulla 'club'. Many of the basic terms, however, remain inherited Semitic: dol 'victory', gäddälä 'kill', säffärä 'camp', särawit 'army', säyf 'sword', tälat 'enemy', tor 'spear, army, war' (torännät), zärräfa 'plunder', and so on. The same is essentially true of the field of economy and trade: cf. gäbäya 'market', käffälä 'pay', täläḳḳa 'borrow' and aläḳḳa 'lend', näggädä 'trade', etc.

Religious terminology includes a very high proportion of long-established loanwords, which entered the Ethiopian language area through Ge'ez during the early centuries of the Christian era. A number of specifically Christian terms are of Greek origin: päpas 'metropolitan, bishop', mänäkuse (and variants) 'monk', däbtära 'lay priest, cantor', gäanna 'Christmas', etc.<sup>2</sup> The majority of borrowed religious terms in Semitic Ethiopian is, however, of Hebrew or Aramaic origin<sup>3</sup>. This includes both specifically Christian and more general terms that may be characterized as 'Judeo-Christian'. Of course, it need hardly be said

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1. Cf. also the item zega 'subject', which appears to be from a cognate Cushitic root.

2. A full list of Greek loans has been given above, p. 62.

3. See especially Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 32-46; see also Ullendorff, Ethiopia and the Bible, p. 121-5.

that a whole body of religious terminology was taken over from Arabic by Islamic communities. As has been pointed out<sup>1</sup>, it is not always easy to be certain either about the direction of the loan-movement or even about the process of borrowing itself between closely related Semitic languages. This is readily illustrated in the field of religious terminology. Items such as māl'ak 'angel', mäläkot 'divinity', haṭi'at 'sin'<sup>2</sup> are all related to original common Ethiopian roots for which there is no reason to suspect borrowing from other Semitic languages, though the particular semantic value given to these derivatives in the religious field may be attributed to the theological colouring current in other Semitic languages<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the specific value of māl'ak as 'angel' alongside the common Eth. root l'k 'send' is attributed to Heb. mal'āk; or haṭi'at as 'sin' besides Eth. ḥt' 'not find, not have', is owed to Aram. h<sup>a</sup>ṭātā. However, a number of basic roots like ḵds 'be holy', ḵbr 'bury', rgm 'curse', brk (C-type) 'bless', mrk *idem* is most likely of inherited Semitic origin semantically as well as formally, there appearing to be no need to imply outside influence in their semantic development. The component roots of the names of the Deity, mlk (amlak) and gz' + bhr (əgzī'abəher), are similarly of inherited Semitic origin. The common Semitic root 'l 'god', which occurs in all other branches of Semitic, is not found as an inherited item in Semitic Ethiopian.

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1. Ullendorff, op.cit., p. 120.

2. See Nöldeke, op.cit., where a full list of items of Hebrew and Aramaic origin is given. Ullendorff, op.cit., gives a similar list.

3. Perhaps not all the items listed by Nöldeke (op.cit.) need have received the influence of Hebrew or Aramaic; I cannot see why ḵds, for example, should be so influenced when its semantics are perfectly in accord with the general Semitic theme for this root, qdš.



Two important terms from the field of magic and the supernatural are of non-Semitic origin, namely buda and zar. The latter is derived from the old name of the pagan Agaw sky-god, typically "demoted" to the position of a malevolent spirit in the new religion. The former has cognates throughout the Ethiopian language area, including Sudanic languages like Shilluk, Bongo and Bari<sup>1</sup>, to which its origin has been ascribed.

The list of items from the fields of law, government, and social organization presents a rather different picture from those of economy or religion, in that the overwhelming majority of items is of inherited Semitic origin, and obvious loanwords appear to be few in number. Out of the 50 terms studied here, 36 (72%) are of safe, directly inherited Semitic origin, whilst only five appear to be of non-Semitic, ie. Cushitic origin. Especially interesting among these five items are the two terms aše ~ ate 'emperor' and the (originally) vocative kan-hoy. The appearance of both terms in Amharic can be roughly dated, the first to the 14th century, to the reign of čAmdä Səyon<sup>2</sup>, and the second possibly to the 16th century, to the reign of Särsä Dəngəl, at least according to native tradition<sup>3</sup>. Both terms are of Agaw origin and appear originally to have been titles or appellatives of Agaw kings.

Amongst the items of inherited Semitic origin are several for which the closest semantic parallel occurs in South Arabian<sup>4</sup>. Of course, the roots of many of these

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1. Cerulli, 'Canti burleschi di studenti delle scuole abissine', RSO, XIII, p. 346.

2. See Conti Rossini, La langue des Kemant en Abyssinie, p. 171.

3. See Mittwoch, 'Dschanhoi - die amharische Bezeichnung für 'Majestät'', ZA, XXV, p. 281-8; also Conti Rossini, op.cit., p. 286.

4. See Ullendorff, 'The Semitic languages of Ethiopia and their contribution to general Semitic studies', Africa, XXV, p. 156, where some S.Arabian lexical parallels are listed; see also Höfner, 'Über sprachliche und kulturelle Beziehungen zwischen Südarabien und Äthiopien in Altertum', ACISE, p. 435.

items do occur elsewhere in Semitic, but the point of interest here lies in the close semantic correlation with S.Arabian. Thus, agär 'country' (ESA. hgr 'town, state'), gäbbar 'vassal', gäbäre 'farmer' (ESA. gbr-m 'group of serfs', 'gbr 'servants'), gult 'fief' (ESA. g(w)l), ngs 'be king' (ESA. ngš 'impose tribute'), šum 'chief' (ESA. šym 'praefectus'), wäsän 'boundary' (ESA. wtn), högg 'law' (ESA. hg), šätä 'sell' (ESA. š(y)t 'trade, carry on business'), and from the field of military terminology särawit 'army' (ESA srwt).

a) law and government

agär 'country' : Gz. hagär 'town', Tna. hagär 'country', etc. Semitic, cf. ESA hgr 'town, state', and Yemeni Ar. hağar 'ruined town'.

aläka 'head, superior': Tna. haläxa, Old Amh. haläka.

There is a number of formally compatible roots in Sem.Eth., none of which, however, is really suitable as a cognate on semantic grounds: <sup>+</sup>hlk 'be destroyed', h<sup>(w)</sup>lk 'count', hlk 'be round'. Rather, one wonders if this root hlk 'chief' might not be connected with Sem.Eth. lhk 'be more', despite the difference in laryngals and the different sequence of radicals<sup>1</sup>.

ate 'emperor' : Old Amh. hase ~ hate. This item appears to be of Agaw origin, cf. Kem. ašena. The introduction of the term into Amharic has been dated to the reign of <sup>c</sup>Amdä Šäyon.

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1. For the Semitic connexions of lhk see Ullendorff, 'Contribution of South Semitic to Hebrew lexicography', VT, VI, p. 194 ff, where Heb. lah<sup>a</sup>qā 'senior ones' is compared.



One wonders whether the Agaw term ašena might in turn be ultimately derived from something such as Gz. haṣani, which appears on Axumite inscriptions<sup>1</sup> in the sense of 'administrator'.

awaḡ 'proclamation': an agent noun (qätali) pattern from the Sem.Eth. root ᶜwd 'go around'. In Ge'ez ᶜawadi has the meaning 'bandit, one who roams around the country', but the root has a wide range of meanings to which 'proclamation' can easily be related.

əngəda 'guest, stranger': Gz.Te. 'əngəda, Har. nugda, Gaf. əngədä, Sod. nägda, etc. From the Sem.Eth. root ngd in the primary sense of 'travel'<sup>2</sup>.

bad ~ bada 'stranger': Gz. baᶜd, Tna. baᶜdi. Semitic, cf. Ar. baᶜīd 'distant, strange', ESA. bᶜd 'remote'.

dañña 'establish order', dañña (n) 'judge': Gz. däyyänä (vb) 'judge', däyyani (n), Tna. däyyänä, dañña, Har. dañña. The Tigrinya noun, and maybe the Harari, too, are probably amharicisms and not inherited items. The Amharic root seems to derive from <sup>+</sup>dny with transposed radicals. Common Semitic dyn.

färrädä 'judge' : Gz.Tna. färädä, Har. färäda, etc. Semitic prd 'separate, distinguish'.

fätta 'release, divorce': Gz. fäṭṭa, Tna. fäṭṭe, Har. fäṭṭaḥa, Ch. fätam, etc. Common Semitic ptḥ.

gäbbärä 'pay tax, tribute' (gäbäre 'farmer', gäbbar 'vassal', gəbər 'tax', etc.): Gz. 'agäbbärä 'impose tribute', gäbr 'slave', gäbar 'worker', etc., Tna. gäbbärä 'pay tax',

1. See Littmann, Die deutsche Axum-Expedition, Vol.4, Berlin 1913, p. 43, 45, inscriptions no. 12, 13.

2. See below, p. 186.

Har. gēbāra 'pay an amount of money or cloth to the bride at the conclusion of the engagement', Sod. gābbārām 'tame', etc. The root gbr also means 'work, do' in N.Ethiopian (Gz. gābrä, etc.), which would appear to be the starting point of the various semantic developments in the rest of Sem.Ethiopian. Common Semitic gbr 'force, be strong'.

gult 'fief' : Gz. g<sup>w</sup>ölt, Tna. g<sup>w</sup>ölti, Te. gölt, Semitic, cf. ESA. g(w)l and perhaps also Ar. gūl 'the wall around a well or grave'.

geta 'master, lord': Tna. g<sup>w</sup>äyta, Har. gōyta, Gaf. g<sup>w</sup>itā, Arg. geta, Old Amh. g<sup>w</sup>eta, etc.

Various attempts at the etymology of this item have been made; Cerulli<sup>1</sup> considers it to be of Agaw origin, deriving it from a form analogous to Khm. qawatā 'leader'. Leslau<sup>2</sup> suggests a connexion with Galla kofta, which is, however, more likely to be a derivative of rosa 'tribe'. Rather, the etymology proposed by Cohen<sup>3</sup> is the most probable, namely a derivative of +g<sup>w</sup>äy (Amh. -ge 'place'), which appears in older Amharic as an independent item gay ~ gäy ~ gey<sup>4</sup>, and elsewhere in S.Ethiopian. This item is almost certainly Semitic and is related to ESA. gw 'collegium', Heb. gōy.

gäzza 'rule, buy' : Tna. gäz'e 'possess, buy', Te. gäz'a, Har. gäza'a 'govern', Arg. gäzza, etc.

The root appears in Ge'ez in the nominal form 'ögzi 'lord, master'. Semitic, cf. Ar. gāza'a 'distribute, share' and perhaps also gāzā 'reward'.

1. Cerulli, Studi etiopici I, p. 252.

2. Leslau, An etymological dictionary of Harari, p. 76.

3. Cohen, Nouvelles études d'éthiopien méridional, p. 88.

4. See Littmann, 'Altamharisches Glossar. Der Wortschatz in den "canzoni geez-amariñña"', RSO, XX, p. 498. See also Cohen, 'Gy', ge, etc. "vallée, pays", GLECS, I, p. 34.



Āan(hoy) 'emperor' : composed of Āan and the vocative particle hoy. The element Āan is from Agaw, Bil.Kem. Āana 'elephant', used as a royal epithet. The introduction of this term into Amharic is traditionally dated to the reign of Sārṣä Dəngäl<sup>1</sup>.

həgg 'law' : Gz. həgg, Tna. həggi, Te. həg 'limit', etc. The initial h- of the Amharic form indicates that this is a Ge'ez take-over. Semitic, cf. especially ESA. hg. This South Semitic root may be a peculiar development of hqq, occurring in the rest of Semitic.

həzb 'people' : Gz. həzb, Tna. həzbi. A take-over from Ge'ez. Semitic, cf. Ar. hizb 'crowd, group of people', (vb) ḥazaba 'collect'.

käbbärä 'be honoured': Gz. käbrä, Tna. käbärä, Te. käbra, Ch. akäbäräm, etc. Common Semitic kbr.

kasä 'compensate' : Tna. kähasä, Te. kähasa, Har. kēhasa, Arg. kāhasa, Ch. kasām, etc. Praetorius<sup>2</sup> related this to Heb. khš 'grow lean', but this is perhaps better connected with Eth. <sup>+</sup>ksh of the same meaning.

kässäsä 'accuse' : Tna. käsäsä, Te. kässa, Har. käsäsa, etc. Semitic, cf. Syr. kāses 'blame, reprove', perhaps also Heb. kāsas 'compute',

Akk. kasāsu 'cut up', Ar. kassa 'pulverize'.

kätäma 'town' : Tna. kätäma, Har. kätäm- in kätämbäri 'entrance to a compound'. In Ge'ez kätäma means 'end, edge, summit', but is also used later in the sense of 'royal camp', from which the meaning 'town' has developed. Probably Semitic, cf. Ar. katama 'hold, hide, conceal' (Gz. kätämä 'seal, close').

1. Mittwoch, 'Dschanhoi - die amharische Bezeichnung für 'Majestät'', ZA, XXV, p. 286: 'die Abessinier glauben, dass das Wort Āan(hoi) erst seit dem 16. Jahrhundert im Gebrauch sei, während man früher dafür danzō gesagt habe'.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 7.

käṭṭa 'punish' : Gz. käs<sup>c</sup>a 'humiliate', Tna. käs<sup>c</sup>e 'punish',  
Te. käs<sup>c</sup>a, Har. kaṭa'a, etc. Semitic,  
cf. Ar. qaṣa<sup>c</sup>a 'grind, squash', Heb.

qāṣa<sup>c</sup> 'scrape'.

leba 'thief' : Arg. leba, Gaf. libä, E. neba, etc.  
Perhaps from Galla, cf. labobu 'steal'.

malä 'swear' : Gz. māhalä, Te. māhala, Gaf. malä, etc.  
The root mhl occurs in other Semitic  
languages but with a range of meanings

difficult to relate to Semitic Ethiopian 'swear': Ar. maḥala  
'be barren', Heb. māhal 'renounce', ESA. mhl 'misfortune'.

näṣṣä 'be king' : Gz. näṣṣä, and hence modern Sem.Eth.  
ngs. Semitic, cf. Ar. naṣaṣa 'compel',  
Heb. nāgas 'urge, drive', ESA. ngš

'impose tribute'. The development of the root ngš in  
Ethiopian is described by Conti Rossini<sup>1</sup>.

näṣa ~ näṭa 'free': Tna.Te. näṣa. If, as seems likely,  
näṣa is to be derived from Sem.Eth.  
nṣh 'be pure', then the Tigrinya and  
Tigre forms must be loans from Amharic; the protoform would  
then be <sup>+</sup>näṣah. For nṣh cf. Ar. naṣaḥa 'be pure', Heb.  
nāṣah 'sparkle'.

Another term with the same meaning in Amharic is ara,  
occurring in Old Amharic as hara, and in Ga'ez as hara  
'army, troops, officers', harawi 'free, noble, warrior',  
an item which Praetorius<sup>2</sup> sees in the military title awrari  
(ie. <sup>+</sup>awra hari 'der wilde, männliche Krieger'). The root  
is <sup>+</sup>hrr, to which Heb. ḥor 'nobles', Ar. harra 'be of noble  
stock', Aram. h<sup>a</sup>rar 'liberate', etc., may be compared.

1. Conti Rossini, 'Aethiopica', RSO, X, p. 481-3.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 199.



rätta 'win a lawsuit': Gz. rät<sup>C</sup>a 'be straight, prosper',  
Tna. rät<sup>C</sup>e 'win', Te. rät<sup>C</sup>a 'succeed',  
Har. rāta'a, etc. Semitic, cf.

Akk. retû 'be fortified'.

sārra (i) 'work', (ii) 'prescribe': (i) Gz.Te. sārḥa,  
Tna. sārḥe; (ii) Gz. śār<sup>C</sup>a, Tna. sār<sup>C</sup>e,  
Te. sār<sup>C</sup>a, etc. For Sem.Eth. srḥ I

cannot find a satisfactory cognate, but śr<sup>C</sup> can be compared  
with Ar. šara<sup>C</sup>a, ESA. šr<sup>C</sup> 'order'.

šäffätä 'revolt' : Tna. šäffätä, Arg. šeffäta, Sod. šiffätäm,  
etc., but note that in some Gurage  
languages the root appears as šft,

which brings to mind Gz. sft ('asfätä 'deceive, seduce').

This root, sft, may be compared, perhaps, with Ar. safuṭa  
'be liberal'.<sup>1</sup>

šällämä 'award' : Tna. šällämä, Har. šēläma, Arg. šelläma,  
etc. S.Ethiopian B-type pattern on the  
root slm 'peace'. Common Semitic šlm.

šum 'chief' : Gz. šöyum (p.p. of šemä 'put, appoint');  
the item occurs throughout Sem.Eth.

The root šym is, of course, Semitic,  
but an especially close semantic parallel of the noun šum  
occurs in ESA. šym 'praefectus, dominus'.

šomagöle 'elder' : Tna.Te. šomagöle. Agaw, cf. Bil. sīngär  
(pl. sīmāgal), Khm. šängel, Kem. simgär,  
etc. Amh. šomagöle appears to be

derived from the Agaw plural stem simagäl- plus the  
individualizing suffix -e.

wärräsä 'inherit' : Gz.Tna. wäräsä, Te. wärsa, etc.  
Common Semitic wrt.

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1. See Rundgren, 'The root šft in the modern Ethiopic  
languages', Orientalia Suecana, II, p. 19-21, for a detailed  
discussion on this root; see also Wajnberg 'Abessinische  
Etymologien', RO, XIII, p. 39.

- was 'guarantor' : Gz.Tna. wahəs, Te. wəhsa, Har. was,  
Ch. was, etc. Semitic, cf. ESA whś  
in Qatabanian swhś 'gift, donation'.
- wäsän 'border' : Gz.Tna.Te.Arg. wäsän, etc. Semitic,  
cf. ESA. wtn. Another Amharic item  
meaning 'border', dämbär, is related  
by Praetorius<sup>1</sup> to the root dbr 'mountain'.
- zega 'subject' : Gz. zega 'poor', Har. zēga, etc.  
This is of Agaw origin; a variant  
form of the Cushitic root also appears  
in Amh. dəha 'poor'<sup>2</sup>; cf. Bil. ǣgā, Khm. ǣǣā, Kem. ǣǣ-  
'be ruined'; note also Beja ǣhāna 'begger'.

b) economy

- amole 'salt bar currency': Tna. 'amole, Har. amōle,  
Arg. amole, etc. E.Cushitic, cf.  
Galla amole, Sid. amōle.
- bərr 'silver, dollar': Tna. bərri, Gaf. bərrä, etc; a  
different root pattern occurs in  
Gz. bərrur. Semitic, cf. Ar. barra  
'be just', Heb. bārar 'be pure', Akk. barāru 'shine', etc.
- barya 'slave' : This item is traditionally connected  
with the ethnic name Barya, though  
these people do not use the term in  
describing themselves<sup>3</sup>. It is not inconceivable that the  
ethnic name (of whatever origin) came to be used as the  
common noun 'slave', since the so-called Nilotic peoples  
of western Ethiopia have, of course, been the traditional

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 100.

2. See below, p.185.

3. See Conti Rossini, La storia d'Etiopia, p. 72.



source of slaves for highland Ethiopia. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> suggested a derivation from Sem. b<sup>c</sup>r 'cattle, herds', the same root as found in Amh. bäre 'ox', but I do not think that this is likely.

čanā 'load' : Gz.Tna. šā<sup>c</sup>anā, Te. 'aš<sup>c</sup>ana, Har. ta'ana ~ tāna ~ tēna, Ch. čarām, etc. Semitic z<sup>c</sup>n 'travel, migrate', but note also Heb. ṭā<sup>c</sup>an 'load' beside šā<sup>c</sup>an 'migrate'.

dōha 'poor' : Tna. dōxa, Gaf. dōha. From Cushitic, cf. perhaps Galla dega 'poor'; similar forms also occur in Kem. dāxa and Khm. dōxa, but these look like loans from Amharic. See zega 'subject'<sup>2</sup>.

gābāya ~ gābōya 'market': Gaf. gābōyā, Go. gebi, Ch. gābāya, etc. Praetorius<sup>3</sup> regarded this as a derivative of the root gb and meaning, therefore, originally something like 'reunion', i.e. <sup>+</sup>gābō + ya. gānzāb 'money, property': Gz. gānzāb 'treasure', Tna. gānzāb 'money'. The immediate origin of this is an Aramaic form such as g<sup>e</sup>nūzbā, also appearing as gizz<sup>e</sup>bar, besides ginzak, etc. These are all ultimately of Old Persian origin: cf. ganza 'treasure', ganzabara 'treasury'.

tā-g<sup>w</sup>azā 'journey', g<sup>w</sup>az 'caravan': Gz. gō<sup>c</sup>zā ~ gā<sup>c</sup>azā 'change camp, migrate', Tna. gā<sup>c</sup>azā, Har. gāza, etc. Semitic, cf. perhaps Ar. gāza 'travel', Heb. gāz 'pass, change', etc., for a good semantic and acceptable formal fit, rather than gz<sup>c</sup> 'cut' cited by Dillmann<sup>4</sup>.

1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 171.

2. See above, p. 134.

3. Praetorius, op.cit.

4. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 1187.

həbt 'wealth' : this is a take-over from Gz. həbt;  
note, however, the Amharic development  
kəbt 'cattle' with false restitution  
of k for h and subsequent differentiation of meaning.

käffälä 'pay, divide': Gz. käffälä 'divide, assign',  
Tna. käffälä 'pay, divide', Te. käfla,  
Har. käfäla, etc. Sem.Eth. kfl is  
to be compared with Ar. kafala 'support, maintain' and  
Heb. kāpal 'double, multiply'.

k<sup>w</sup>ättärä 'count' : Tna. k<sup>w</sup>äsärä, Arg. k<sup>w</sup>ättära,  
Gaf. k<sup>w</sup>ittärä, etc. This root k<sup>w</sup>sr  
is almost certainly identical with  
the root k<sup>w</sup>sr 'tie a knot' (Gz. k<sup>w</sup>äsärä ~ k<sup>w</sup>ässärä). If  
this assumption is correct, it gives an interesting glimpse  
into early methods of recording numbers. Semitic, cf.  
perhaps Syr. q<sup>e</sup>tar 'attach'.

tä-läkkä 'borrow', a-läkkä 'lend': Gz. läkkəha 'loan',  
Tna. 'aläkkəhe, Har. aləkəha, etc.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. laqiha 'conceive',  
Heb. lāqah 'take'.

nägädä 'trade' : Tna. nägädä, Te. nägda, Har. nigdi  
āša (lit. 'do trade'), Sl. nägädä, etc.  
The Sem.Eth. root ngd originally seems  
to have meant something like 'travel', as suggested by the  
derivatives mängäd 'road' and əngəda 'stranger'. Semitic,  
cf. Aram. ngd 'flow'.

šätä 'sell' :: Gz. šetä, Tna. šäyätä ~ šätä.  
Semitic, cf. ESA. š(y)ṭ.

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## c) warfare

aškär 'servant, soldier': Tna.Te. <sup>c</sup>aškär ~ <sup>c</sup>askär,

Har. aškär. From Ar. <sup>c</sup>askar.

döl 'victory' : Tna. döl, Har. dil ~ döl. Both the

Tigrinya and Harari items are probably

loans from Amharic. The root is dhl

(Gz. tädöhlä 'retreat, flee') and <sup>+</sup>döhl > döl would originally have meant something like 'flight, rout', the apparent reversal of meaning coming from a phrase such as

döl adärrägä 'make a rout' > 'be victorious'. Semitic,

cf. Ar. dahala 'flee', Syr. d<sup>e</sup>hel 'be afraid'.

gäddälä 'kill' : Har. gädäla, Arg. gäddäla, etc.

This root is probably not formally

connected with Sem. qtl, as Praetorius<sup>1</sup>

suggested. Rather, it is derived from gdl: cf. Gz. tägadälä

'fight', gädäla 'carcass', Te. gadäla 'fight'. Semitic

gdl, cf. esp. Ar. ḡadala 'quarrel', taḡadala *idem*.

The Semitic root qtl does not occur in Amharic, but is

preserved elsewhere in Sem.Eth: cf. Gz.Tna. kätälä,

Ch. k'ätäräm, Enn. 'ätärä, etc.

gorade 'scimitar' : Tna. g<sup>w</sup>orade, Te. gōrade, Har. gurāde,

Ms. g<sup>w</sup>ärade, etc. Probably from Aden

Ar. gurad.

gašša 'shield' : Tna.Arg. gašša, Gaf. gašä, etc.

Cushitic, cf. Kem. gaša, S.Agaw gäšī,

Khamṣa gäyša, Galla gačana ~ gačena,

Som. gāšān.

marräkä 'take prisoners': Gz. mahräkä, Tna. maräxä,

Te. maräka, Har. maräxa, etc. This

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 72.

looks like a denominative form from a noun in m- from a root <sup>+</sup>hrk.

säffärä 'set up camp': Gz.Tna. säfärä, Te. säfra,  
Har. säfära, etc. This is probably  
the same root as Sem.Eth. sfr 'measure'.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. sāfara 'travel', Heb. sāpar 'count',  
ESA. sfr (n) 'measure'.

särawit 'army' : Gz.Tna. särawit. Semitic, cf. ESA  
srwt.

säyf 'sword' : Gz. säyf, Tna. säyfi, Har. sīf.  
Semitic, cf. Ar. sayf.

šäššä 'flee' : Gz. säkäyā 'take refuge with',  
Te. säka, Har. säka 'flee', Arg. säka,  
Sod. šäššäm, Ch. säk'äm, etc. The

initial š might be explained as due to the influence of  
the following š; the latter would seem to derive from k  
through palatalization to č and thence š. An alternative  
etymology was proposed by Praetorius<sup>1</sup>, who connected  
Amh. šäššä with Gz. sww ('ansosäwä 'go, walk'). The former  
derivation from sky is, I think, preferable.

šotäl 'dagger' : Gz. säwtäl, Tna. šotäl ~ šutol,  
Te. sotäl, Har. šötäl, etc. Probably  
Cushitic, cf. Som. šotal, Saho šotal,  
Kem. šutal, etc.

tälla 'hate', tälat 'enemy': Gz.Te. šäl'a, Tna. šäl'e,  
Har. täla'a, Gaf. täšalä, etc.  
Semitic, cf. Akk. šelû 'be hostile'.

The common Semitic term for enemy, <sup>+</sup>ḏrr, occurs in N.Eth:  
cf. Gz. Tna. šär (zär).

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprachen p. 132.



tor 'spear'<sup>1</sup> : this might be connected with the Sem.Eth. root swr (Gz. ṣorā 'carry', ṣor 'burden, load'). Alternatively, it could be related to the root seen in Gaf. ṣāwwārā 'strong, rigid'† Sem.Eth. swr is of Semitic origin, cf. Soq. ṣor 'wear'.

tā-wagga 'fight' : Gz. tāwag'a 'wound o.a.', wāg'a 'strike, wound', Tna. wāg'e, Ch. wākam 'crush', etc. Semitic, cf. Ar. waḡa'a 'hit', Soq. 'ége.

wättaddär 'soldier': Tna. wättəhaddär ~ wättahaddär. Guidi<sup>2</sup> suggested a derivation from the phrase watto addärä 'che vive andando quà e là'; this is ingenious, but sounds a little like popular etymologizing.

zärräfä 'pillage, plunder': Tna. zärräfä, Te. zārfa, Har. zārāfa, etc. Semitic, cf. Ar. zarafa 'come upon s.o.', Aram. n<sup>e</sup> zripūtā 'impetus, attack', ESA. zrft 'incursio bellica'.

#### d) religion

amlak 'God' : Gz. 'amlak, Tna. 'amlax. Formally a plural of +mälk 'king'. The same development of the common Semitic root mlk to express the 'divine ruler' as well as a 'secular ruler' occurs outside Ethiopic.

əgziabəher 'God' : Gz. 'əgzi'abəher 'lord of the earth'. buda 'one who has the power of casting the evil eye': this term occurs throughout modern Semitic Ethiopian and in various Cushitic and

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1. Also meaning 'army' and 'war', though 'spear' is probably the primary sense.

E.Sudanic languages, to which Cerulli<sup>1</sup> ascribes its origin: 'è interessante notare che budā è certamente voce di origine nilotica: Scilluc bōdo fabbro-ferraio, artefice; Jur e Bari bōdo (id); Bongo bodo; il che ricollega anche linguisticamente il budā alle note idee circa i fabbri-ferrai'.

barrākā 'bless' : Gz. barākā, Tna. barāxā, Te. barāka.  
Common Semitic brk.

dābtāra 'lay priest': Tna. dābtāra; in Ge'ez dābtāra has the meaning 'tent, tabernacle' and dābtārawi 'one who lives in a tent', of which Dillmann says 'vulgo etiam sic vocatur Canonicus ...homo literatus'<sup>2</sup>. The item is ultimately of Greek origin - diphthērai 'skins made into a tent' (pl. of diphthēra 'skin, leather').

kābbārā 'bury' : Gz.Tna. kābārā, Te. kābra, Har. kābāra, etc; a nominal derivative occurs in most Sem.Eth. languages with the meaning 'grave, tomb' (Gz. mākābart, kābār, Amh. mākabōr, Har. kābri, etc.). Common Semitic qbr.

kāddāsā 'consecrate': Gz.Tna. kāddāsā. Nöldeke<sup>3</sup> regarded Sem.Eth. kds as influenced in its semantics by Jewish-Christian usage.  
Common Semitic qdš.

kes 'priest' : Gz. kāsīs, Tna. kāššī, Te. kās, Har. kes. The modern Sem.Eth. forms may be derived from <sup>+</sup>kāsōs, <sup>+</sup>kāss.

A loan from Syriac qašešā 'elder'.

1. Cerulli, 'Canti burleschi di studenti delle scuole abissine', RSO, XIII, note on p. 346.

2. Dillmann, Lexicon linguae aethiopicae, col. 1106.

3. Nöldeke, Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft, p. 35.



märrākā 'bless' : Tna. märrāḫä, Arg. merrāḫa, Gaf. mirrākä,  
etc. A denominative from mōrak<sup>1</sup>

'spittle'. Spitting as a mark of  
benediction occurs widely in Ethiopia, cf. Galla tufa  
'benedizione di augurio o di riconoscenza manifestata a  
mezzo della saliva soffiata leggermente verso la faccia  
o l'oggetto che si vuol benedire'<sup>2</sup>.

rāggāmā 'curse' : Gz.Tna. rāggāmā. Semitic, cf. Ar.  
raḡama 'stone', Heb. rāgam, Ug. raḡm  
'say', Akk. raḡamu 'protest, cry'.

tomä 'fast' : Gz.Tna. ṣomä, Te. ṣoma, Arg. ṭoma,  
Gaf. ṣimä, etc. The root ṣwm also  
occurs in Arabic and, like the Sem.  
Eth. root, is regarded as being a loan from Hebrew ṣām<sup>3</sup>.

zar 'evil spirit' : This item occurs throughout Semitic  
Ethiopian. It is derived from the  
name of a pagan Cushitic sky god,  
probably Agaw: cf. Bil. ḡar, though similar forms occur  
elsewhere in Cushitic and Omotic<sup>4</sup>.

In this and the previous two subsections, only those  
loan items with a particular phonetic point to be  
discussed, or a wide scatter throughout Semitic Ethiopian  
have been listed.

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1. See above, p. 125 .

2. da Thiene, Dizionario della lingua galla, Harar 1939,  
p. 323.

3. Nöldeke, op.cit., p. 36.

4. Exx: Baiso sere 'sky', Kaffa yaro.

## V Grammatical items: pronouns, numerals and particles

This final section covers what is, strictly speaking, not a semantic but a grammatical field, in so far as the referents of the items here are not definable objects, actions, or qualities, but are (in the case of pronouns) part of the relations of the speaker to his audience or (in the case of particles) the internal structurals of the language itself. These two categories, pronouns and **particles, and numerals** which in many ways lend themselves to grouping with the other two, are typically included under the 'basic' vocabulary pole of the lexicon. For example, the 1952 Swadesh 200-item 'basic' word-list<sup>1</sup> includes the cardinal numerals from 'one' to 'five', the pronouns of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons, singular and plural, as well as other pronominals like 'here', 'there', 'when', 'how', and the particles 'and', 'at', 'if', 'in', 'not'. The principle behind the inclusion of these items is partly that such elements tend to be among the most conservative areas of the lexicon because of their intimate connexion with morphology. Whether all the items listed here by Swadesh can be correctly classified as lexical universals or not does not immediately affect the discussion. Some of these items, especially 'not', 'if', 'and', cannot, I feel, be thought of as universals nor included in a 'basic' word-list, since they are so closely involved with the typology of the language. However, in most languages the lower numerals and the primary pronominal forms are, on the whole, derived from the inherited stock of the language. There are naturally exceptions; within the field

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1. Swadesh, 'Lexicostatistic dating of prehistoric ethnic contacts', Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XCVI, p. 452-63.



of Hamito-Semitic alone note the use of Arabic numerals in many of the Berber dialects above 'two', or 'ten'. In the case of pronouns, one need go no further than English 'they' and 'them' to find borrowed elements. However, the data from Amharic follow the expected trend in that all the morphemic elements (though not the actual forms) of the personal and other pronouns are inherited Semitic, as are all numerals except 'nine' and 'thousand'.

The personal pronouns of the 2nd person, antä, anči, antu, the interrogatives, man, mən<sup>1</sup>, and the demonstratives, yəh ~ -zzih and ya ~ -zzəya, present no problem in derivation from common Semitic forms<sup>2</sup>. The 1st person pronouns, əne and əñña, are clearly derived from inherited Semitic forms, but not directly. The final -e of əne 'I' appears to be due to the influence of the corresponding possessive suffix, -e; a similar confusion of independent and dependent pronoun forms occurs throughout S.Ethiopian<sup>3</sup>. The initial ə-, on the other hand, instead of the expected a- (cf. Gz. 'anä, Har. ān, Arg. ay, etc.), is probably taken over by analogy from the plural əñña, a feature which, again, occurs in several other S.Ethiopian languages: Ch. əya, etc. The 1st person plural pronoun, əñña, together with its cognates throughout S.Ethiopian and in Tigre in N.Ethiopian, lacks the initial n- found in Gz. nəñnā and Tna. nəñna and generally reconstructed for the Proto-Semitic form. The loss of this initial n-, whether it occurred at the common Semitic Ethiopian stage or independently in S.Ethiopian and Tigre, can be attributed to a kind of haplology: nəñna > <sup>+</sup>əñna ~ həñna<sup>4</sup>. Hetzron<sup>5</sup> derives the S.Eth. forms from

1. The element -dər ~ -dən in the interrogative məndər 'what' is, however, of Agaw origin. See Tubiana, 'A propos de l'amharique "məndən"', GLECS, IX, p. 15-7.

2. The reconstructable protoforms of the demonstratives are <sup>+</sup>zikä and <sup>+</sup>zi'a, to which Gz. zəku 'that' and zi'a-, possessive pronoun base, may be formally compared.

3. See Hetzron, Ethiopian Semitic, p. 32-3.

4. Cf. Egyptian Ar. ihñā, Yemeni Ar. hinnā, etc.

5. Hetzron, op.cit., p. 33-4.

nəhna > \*nina > \*ñəña > əñ(ñ)a, etc., and regards S.Eth. forms like Arg. ənnə as having been depalatalized later. Whilst there is some evidence for the change -əñC- > -iC- in Amharic and more so in certain Gurage languages<sup>1</sup>, there would appear to be no other instance of palatalization caused by a preceeding element, as opposed to a following one, in Amharic. Might not all the S.Ethiopian forms, then, be derived from a common \*əhna ~ həna (as Te. həna) and the palatalization n > ñ be secondary, Arg. ənnə, etc., preserving the original, non-palatalized form? However, be this as it may, the pronoun is still ultimately of inherited Semitic origin, which is the main point here.

The 3rd person pronoun base ərs- ~ əss- derives, of course, from the noun rə's 'head' and probably originated in the use of a noun denoting a part of the body together with the appropriate pronominal suffix as a stressed pronoun, a construction which is still current in Amh. əne rase 'I myself', and in Tna. 'anā rə'sāy. Thus, ərsu 'he' derives from rə's+u 'his head' and similarly Tna. nəssu 'he' from nāfs+u 'his soul' and perhaps also Arg. kəssu 'he' from kārs+u 'his belly'. The original independent pronouns of the 3rd person in Semitic Ethiopian (Gz. wə'ətu, yə'əti) survive in Gafat (wət, yət), Zway (ut, it), whilst a variant form in h occurs in Təgre (hətu, həta) and apparently in many of the Gurage languages<sup>2</sup>. The old plural pronouns are mostly replaced in S.Ethiopian by a compound of ənnä- and the singular pronoun<sup>3</sup>.

The numerals in Amharic are of inherited Semitic origin, except for 'nine', whose origin is enigmatic, and 'thousand',

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1. See p. 34 .

2. See Hetzron, op.cit., p. 30 ff.

3. ibid., p. 29.



which is of Agaw origin. Some of the Semitic numerals, whilst presenting no etymological problems, do exhibit interesting phonetic developments, especially and, hulät(t), sost, arat(t)<sup>1</sup>. The numeral and 'one' (Old Amh. hand) derives from hadä (Tna. hadä ~ hade, Te. fem. hatte, Arg. hand), an ellipsis of 'ahad-', which occurs in Gz. 'ahadu and Har. ahad. The other S.Eth. forms could derive from either the shortened or the longer form: Gy. ät, Ch. at, Sl. ad, etc.

The Semitic Ethiopian languages all use the root kl' for the numeral 'two': Gz. käl'e(tu), Tna. kälättä, Te. käl'ot, Amh. hulät(t), Arg. ket, Har. ko'ot ~ köt, Ch. x<sup>w</sup>et, etc. The numeral 'twenty' is also formed from this root in S.Ethiopian (Amh. haya, Har. kuya, Arg. kiya, Ch. x<sup>w</sup>uya, etc.), whilst the original inherited Semitic term survives only in N.Eth. (Gz. Cäśra, Tna.Te. Cäsra). The form of haya, etc., is analogous to the other tens, being built on the root of the unit numeral plus the suffix -a : +k<sup>(w)</sup>äl(,)e + a, as säläsa 'thirty', arba 'forty', etc. The root tny, from which all other Semitic languages derive the numeral 'two'<sup>2</sup>, survives in Semitic Ethiopian only in the day name Gz. sänuy, Amh. sännäo 'Monday' and the verb 'accompany' (Tna. sännäyā, Amh. šännä, Arg. šennä, Har. ašēña, etc.), to which Ar. tanā 'double' and Heb. šānā 'repeat' may be compared.

Various attempts have been made at the etymology of the numeral 'nine', Amh. zätäñ, which has cognates throughout S.Ethiopian, whilst N.Ethiopian preserves the inherited Semitic item (Gz. tə/äs<sup>c</sup>atu, Tna. təš<sup>c</sup>atte, Te. sə<sup>c</sup>).

1. hulät(t): k > h (see p. 41 ); sost: l > F<sup>w</sup> (see p. 42 ); arat(t): b > Ø (see p. 42 ).

2. Occasionally in ESA kl'y and kl'ty are used as cardinal numerals beside tny, t(n)ty.

Praetorius<sup>1</sup> tried to derive it from a compound of the demonstrative zā + hss 'be small' + adjectival -āñ:  
 + zāhōssāñ 'the smaller', presumably referring to a kind of subtraction method, like Lat. undeviginti 'nineteen'. Leslau<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, tries to relate zḥñ to ts<sup>c</sup> + āñ by a rather tortuous combination of metathesis and irregular sound change. Neither is, to say the least, satisfactory, nor can any cognate be found outside the Semitic languages of Ethiopia. This item must, therefore, remain a puzzle for the present. The inherited Semitic term, however, would appear to survive in Amh. tāsāt 'midday', 'l'ora nona', cited by Afāwārk<sup>3</sup>.

The numeral ši(h) 'thousand' is taken from Agaw: cf. Bil. šix, Khm. šex, Kem. ši, S.Agaw šay, and is not from the Semitic root syh as suggested by Praetorius<sup>4</sup>. The borrowing of this Agaw item here may be neatly explained as "filling a gap" in the inherited lexicon. The Semitic root 'lp, which is used for 'thousand' in the other Semitic languages, has the meaning 'ten thousand' in Sem.Eth. (Gz. 'ōlf, etc.), whilst 'thousand' is expressed by the phrase 'ten hundred' (Gz. Caśārtu mō't).

We must now turn to the slightly more complicated sphere of particles, which may be either separable or inseparable, and which include a wide range of items such as time and place adverbs, syntactic markers (conjunctions, etc.) and prepositions and postpositions. The majority of these particles is of inherited Semitic origin. Some of the more fundamental ones are common to all or most Semitic languages: bā-, lā-, māče, alā, tač, etc. Most, however,

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 203.

2. Leslau, 'Notes de grammaire et d'étymologie éthiopienne', Word, V, p. 278-9.

3. Afevork, Grammatica della lingua amarica, Roma 1905, p. 62.

4. Praetorius, op.cit.



are peculiar to Semitic Ethiopian: sə-, əskä, sənt, zare, əndä, ənğa, bəčča, etc. The number of items that may be attributed to a Cushitic source in this field is very small: ahun, gən, ənği, na, gar(a), not all of which are incontestable.

1. Inseparable particles. bä-/bə-, lä-/lə-, kä- ~ hä-<sup>1</sup> and yä- are straightforward common Semitic<sup>2</sup>. The conjunctive suffix -m(m) and its widespread cognates in Sem.Eth. (Gaf. -mma, Arg.Har. -m, and the particle of insistence in Gaf. -m, Har. -m(o), Tna. -mmo, Gz.Te. -mä) are related to the Semitic element m, which occurs as an enclitic in various languages: Akk. -ma, ESA. -m, -mw.

The prefixed particle sə-, which also occurs in Argobba, is probably to be identified with the first element in the free standing preposition əskä<sup>3</sup> and is, perhaps, ultimately derived from another single element in Semitic. The enclitic particles -s(s) and -nə do not appear to have any cognates outside Sem.Eth. (Gz. -sä and -nu, resp.). The latter, however, occurs in Kemant as -ni with the same function of interrogative marker, but may equally well be a loan from Semitic Ethiopian. The conjunctive enclitic -nna (also in Argobba) is probably to be connected with Tna. -n of the same function. With most of these particles that are not straightforward common Semitic like bä-, -m(m), etc., one is on rather unsure ground in trying to establish etymologies for individual items; at best, only an indication of a likely origin can be given. A slightly more positive statement can, however, be made over the point that enclitic particles marking such syntactic

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1. According to Praetorius (*Die amharische Sprache*, p. 267) the preposition ə- is also ultimately from kä-: kä- > hä- > ə-.

2. yä- derives from the demonstrative/relative zä.

3. See below, p. 200.

functions as coordination, emphasis, interrogation, etc., are a feature of the Cushitic languages in general and Agaw in particular. Whilst the actual forms of such particles in Amharic cannot be readily related to those in Agaw, the principle behind such particles is surely to be sought amongst the Cushitic languages rather than to be attributed to an inherent Semitic development.

## 2. Separable particles

ahun 'now' : Arg. ahañ, Har. axxa', Gaf. ahuñ, Sod. ahu, Ch. äx<sup>w</sup>ä, etc. Praetorius<sup>1</sup> derived this from the root kwn :

+hakun or +bäkun 'im Zustand'. It would be a little difficult, however, to relate all the S.Eth. forms to such a derivation; a case could just possibly be made out for a development +bäkun > ahun in Amharic, but not so for the others. Cerulli<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, prefers a derivation from a Sidamo demonstrative element ak : 'lo credo si debba pensare anche all'elemento dimostrativo del Sidama ak, hak....'. The absence of the final n/ñ in the Harari and Gurage forms leads one to suspect that it is an added element and not part of the root and, therefore, if this assumption is correct, the derivation from kwn can no longer be considered.

alä ~ yalä 'without': Arg.Gaf. alä, Sod. yalä, Z. balä, etc. This is most likely to be connected with the element bälä occurring in Gz. 'ənbälä, Te. 'əmbäl, with the same meaning as Amh. alä, etc., rather than with the negative

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 262.

2. Cerulli, Studi etiopici I, p. 232 under aha.



verb prefix al-<sup>1</sup>, and to which Ar.Heb. bal may be compared. In the Zway item balä, therefore, the b- would be the preposition and not part of the root; similarly the y- in Amh. yalä is the preposition yä-.

amna 'last year' : Arg.Har. amna, Gaf. yaymōn,  
Ch. emra, etc. Composed of Sem.Eth.  
cam 'year') and an element -na also  
occurring in other time adverbs in S.Eth: Amh. tānantōnna,  
Har. tāčōna, sēstina, etc.

əkkō emphatic particle: Tna. 'əkkō ~ -(k)ko, Gaf. -ko,  
also Gz. -ke, Te. 'ake. Leslau<sup>2</sup>  
connects this with Heb. 'ak 'surely,  
indeed'; note also ESA. -k severative particle. Like  
several particles discussed here, this consists of or  
contains a common Semitic element k. The various extensions  
on this theme, however, necessarily remain obscure;  
Heb. 'ak, ESA. -k, and Sem.Eth. ('a/ə)ko/e could all be  
derived from the same original element, but as always in  
the case of one-radical etymologies no definite statement  
can really be made.

əndä 'as, like', əndə- 'in order to': Arg.Gaf. əndä.  
Praetorius<sup>3</sup> derived this from  
Gz. 'əntä 'as'. This etymology is  
attractive on semantic grounds, but slightly irregular  
on phonetic grounds, as the development nt > nd cannot  
be established elsewhere in Amharic. Gz. 'əntä has been  
connected with Heb. 'et 'with'<sup>4</sup> and also, less successfully  
I feel, with Ar. cinda 'at, near, by'. Heb. 'et and Akk. itti,

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 57.
  2. Leslau, Hebrew cognates in Amharic, Wiesbaden 1969, p. 23.
  3. Praetorius, op.cit., p. 86.
  4. Praetorius, 'Zur äthiopisch-arabischen Grammatik', ZDMG, XXVII, p. 643; see also Barth, Etymologische Studien zum semitischen insbesondere zum hebräischen Lexicon, Leipzig 1893, p. 17.

which would appear to be cognate, may have developed from <sup>+</sup>'int-, or conversely Gz. 'əntā could have been dissimilated from <sup>+</sup>'itta.

ənğa 'I don't know': Gz. 'ənda<sup>C</sup>i, Tna. 'əndə<sup>C</sup>i. Amh. ənğa must derive from a form <sup>+</sup>'əndi<sup>C</sup>a to account for the palatalization d > ğ.

Gz. 'ənda<sup>C</sup>i is usually explained<sup>1</sup> as deriving from negative 'ən + da<sup>C</sup>i 'my knowledge' (Sem. yd<sup>C</sup>).

ənği contrastive particle: Praetorius<sup>2</sup> connected this with the last, especially the Tigrinya form 'əndə<sup>C</sup>i, which, it is true, could be expected to result in Amh. ənği. The exact semantic equivalent of Amh. ənği in Tigrinya is, however, not 'əndə<sup>C</sup>i but 'əndo. Amh. ənği is fundamentally an emphasizing, affirmative particle, added at the end of a clause, which may optionally be followed by a contrasting clause. Hence, the function of ənği in sentences of the type tārabāz ənği 'do help yourself!' and təllək nāw ənği tənneš aydollām 'it's big, not small' is essentially the same and agrees semantically very well with a particle occurring in other S.Eth. languages: Har. hanḡe, Ch. āgi, Gy. āgiya, End. akkiyā, etc., all meaning 'indeed' and apparently of Cushitic origin: Kambatta, Tembaro ākku. The seeming formal convergence of ənğa and ənği may, therefore, be simply accidental and the two may not be related.

əskā, əskə- 'up to, until': Gz. 'əskā, Te. 'asək, Arg. əstā, Gaf. əskə- ~ əšəkə-, etc. This is probably composed of the same element as the conjunction sə- and the preposition kā-.

1. See Leslau, Lexique soqotri (sudarabique moderne), p. 53.

2. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 85.



Praetorius<sup>1</sup> suggested a connexion between 'əs- and Ar. haytu. An immediate connexion between the two, however, seems unlikely on phonetic grounds alone. If haytu is to be analysed as composed of a separable element hay + t + u<sup>2</sup>, then perhaps the element t and Sem.Eth. 'əs- are ultimately related.

əyyä (i) distributive particle, (ii) 'whilst': these

two formally identical but semantically separate particles are most likely to be distinguished from one another etymologically, too. The distributive əyyä- is probably merely a reduplication of yä- from zä. The temporal conjunction əyyä-, on the other hand, is probably to be connected with Gz. 'ənzä,<sup>3</sup> which is apparently cognate with Ar. 'idā.

bəčča 'alone, only': Gz. bahtu 'only', bəhut 'alone',

Tna. bəhti, Te. bəhət, Arg. bəčča.

Amh. and Arg. bəčča derive from the pattern <sup>+</sup>bəht + ya. Praetorius<sup>4</sup> explained this as a contraction of Gz. bä'ahatti 'in one'. This seems highly unlikely both on phonetic and structural grounds. Rather, Sem.Eth. bəht should be compared with Ar. baht 'pure' and ESA. bəht of the same meaning.

gən 'but'

: Tna. gən ~ gə'ən, Arg.Gaf. gən, etc.

Praetorius<sup>5</sup> connected this with the root wən (wägän 'side'). However, a similar item occurs in Agaw, Kemant gän, which is, moreover, often combined with the element där (dära 'thing') as därgän. This appears in Amharic as daru gən, or, with

1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 296.

2. See Fleisch, L'arabe classique: esquisse d'une structure linguistique, Beyrouth 1968, p. 146.

3. See Praetorius, op.cit., p. 53.

4. ibid., p. 140.

5. ibid., p. 149.

Kemant daru translated into Amharic, as nägär gōn<sup>1</sup>.

gar(a) 'with' : Gaf. gara. This postposition is probably a loan from Galla gara.

lay 'upon' : Gz. la<sup>C</sup>lä, Tna. lō<sup>C</sup>li, Te. lä<sup>C</sup>al, Har. lä'ay ~ lāy, Gaf. laḡḡä, etc.

The common Sem.Eth. form l<sup>C</sup>l is composed of the Semitic prepositional elements l and l<sup>C</sup>.

mäče 'when' : Har. mäči, Arg. mäčče, Gaf. mäčä, Ch. mäčä, etc. All derive from <sup>+</sup>mäte,

which Ludolf<sup>2</sup> actually records for Old Amharic. Common

Semitic mty. The N.Ethiopian languages use a term of

different origin: Gz. ma'ze, Tna. mä'as, Te. mä'aze.

nä-w 'is' : functionally this is a verb, but its etymology clearly betrays its origin as a declarative particle. The stem

nä-, to which various pronominal endings are added, is common to S.Ethiopian in the function of copula<sup>3</sup>. The same pattern, nä+ pronominal suffixes, occurs in Ge'ez as a declarative or deictic: nahu 'behold (him)!' (rarer näyo), näyomu 'behold them!', etc. Sem.Eth. nä- is, of course, related to the common Semitic declarative particle, cf. Ar. 'inna-, Heb. hinne-.

na 'come!' : Gz.Te. nä<sup>C</sup>a, Tna. nō<sup>C</sup>a, Har. na'.

An 'irregular' imperative of the verb 'to come' occurs in most Cushitic languages as well as in other Hamito-Semitic languages. The Sem.Eth. form na<sup>C</sup>- is most probably to be connected with the comparable 'irregular' imperative in most of the Agaw languages: Bil. läux, läḡüä, Kem. laḡ, laḡa, etc.

1. See Tubiana, 'A propos de l'amharique nägär gōn', in Mélanges Marcel Cohen, ed. D.Cohen, Paris 1970, p. 343-7.

2. Ludolf, Lexicon, p. 13.

3. See Hetzron, Ethiopian Semitic, p. 80.



It is not possible to say outright which has borrowed from which here, if, indeed, borrowing has taken place. However, in the absence of any formal cognates of na<sup>c</sup>- in the rest of Semitic, an Agaw origin would not seem unlikely.

sənt 'how much' : Arg. sənt is the only direct formal cognate of the Amharic item. However, other Sem.Eth. forms with the same meaning are almost certainly ultimately related to sənt: Gz. 'əsfəntu, perhaps derived from interrogative 'əf(o) + sənt-u<sup>1</sup>; also Har. misti, Sl.Wl.Z. məst, Gaf. əmməstā, Ms. əmməst, perhaps composed of the interrogative mə- and sə(n)t. The element sənt itself would seem to be a primary nominal derivative from the root wsn 'limit'. There is no need to assume that Amh. sənt developed from an earlier 'əsfənt, as Praetorius proposed<sup>2</sup>; sənt could just be the noun without any prefixed interrogative.

tač<sup>3</sup> 'below' : Gz. tahtā, Tna. tahti, Te. tāhat, Har. tahay, Gaf. taččā, Ch. tāte, etc. Common Semitic tāt.

tənant(ənna) 'yesterday': Gz. təmaləm, Tna. təmalī, Arg. təmay, Gaf. təlam(ənna), etc. Amh. tənant is the only Sem.Eth. form

with a suffix -t; both tml and metathesized tlm occur in Semitic Ethiopian. The suffix -ənna also occurs on Amh. anna and on Har. tāčəna, etc. Common Semitic tml.

wādā 'towards' : Gz. wā'ədā ~ wə'ədā 'next to, by the side of', Arg. wādā 'towards'. This is composed of the conjunction wā- and an adverbial accusative of 'əd 'hand'. Similar constructions employing the noun 'hand' occur in other

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 129; also 'Beiträge zur Äthiopischen Grammatik und Etymologie', BA, I, p. 371.

2. ibid.

3. Also hač from \*kač, substitution of k for t by false analogy.

Semitic languages, cf. especially Akk. ida 'by the side of', Soq. 'id 'towards, into', Šheri id.

wäyäm(m) ~ wäyəs(s) 'or': Tna. wäyäm ~ wäy, Arg. wem,  
Gaf.Ch. wäy, Sod. wäyəs, Sl. we, etc.

This is derived from something like Gz. wämimmä used in alternate questions. The form wämimmä > wäyäm(m) could then have been analysed as wäy + enclitic -m(m), hence the substitution of -s(s) and total dropping of -m(m) in some forms.

yet 'where' : Gz. 'ayte, Tna. 'ayti, Te. 'aya,  
Arg. yed, M. että, Ch. ete, etc.  
Amh. yet must derive from <sup>+</sup>'ayt,

and so too the Argobba and Tigrinya forms. The root of this item is the common Semitic interrogative 'y, to which various suffixes are added to form the interrogative adverb: Ar. 'ayna, Heb. 'ē ~ 'ēkā, Aram. 'aykā, etc.

zare 'today' : this appears to have no cognates elsewhere in Semitic Ethiopian, or in Semitic in general. Praetorius<sup>1</sup>

ingeniously suggested a derivation from a compound of zä + 'əbre(t) (Gz. 'əbret 'alternation, turn, period of office' from the root bry) and compared Ar. al-mutabāriyāni 'day and night' as a derivative of the same Semitic root with a specialized temporal sense. A form like <sup>+</sup>zä'əbre could, indeed, develop into Amh. zare. The N.Ethiopian languages preserve the common Semitic term for 'day' here: Gz.Te. yom, Tna. lomi ~ lom. Most of the S.Eth. languages use items cognate with Amh. ahun 'now', except for Har. hoği, Sl.Wl. awke, Z. awki, which may be cognate with Tna. həzi ~ həğgi 'now'.

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1. Praetorius, Die amharische Sprache, p. 57, 169.



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